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A Background Paper
on Behalf of
**The Royal Commission
on the Northern
Environment.**



Chapter 5

The Impacts of Development

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Chapter 5

THE IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT

The feeling of alienation among northern residents has been expressed to me time and time again, often with what appeared to be justifiable emotion. Northerners consider that government is not accessible to them. Admittedly, people live in northern Ontario because they choose to do so, or their parents or grandparents chose before them. This does not mean, however, that they have forfeited their right to have a say in the decisions of government which clearly affect their lives, nor to help find ways to stimulate the economic basis of their communities. Even with the powers of local government, northerners seek greater and more effective involvement in the decisions that shape their future just as the Indian people seek the capacity to govern their own local affairs.

—Justice E. P. Hartt

Negotiate With the North, Industry and Government Urged

DEVELOPMENT HAS, to a great extent, made the north what it is today. It has produced benefits and caused problems, some grievous. But it is the way that development occurs — how and where the decisions are made — that caused the deepest concern among many northerners who addressed the Commission.

Northern residents described themselves to the Royal Commission as politically powerless, dominated by southern-based populations, governments and corporations. Their plea was for greater northern and local input into planning, for more self-determination.

Non-native residents, for the most part, saw themselves as both northerners and Ontarians. As northerners they felt close to the land. As Ontarians, they claimed the right to petition and influence their governments in Toronto and in Ottawa to protect their land and mitigate the unwelcome side-effects of economic development. Yet they recognized, and were frustrated by, their inability in the present scheme of government and politics to ensure that decisions made in the south would reflect all of the needs of the north.

Native people reminded the Royal Commission of the importance they attribute to their continuous link with the land, of the land's spiritual significance and role in their sense of identity. Their desire was to preserve this ongoing relationship for themselves and their children.

Yet achieving this goal of continuity seemed impossible in the face of pressures for development by non-northerners, in the main

non-native, who did not understand the crucial relevance for Indians for their relationship with the land to their survival as a people.

Mercury pollution was one by-product of economic development in the north which was often mentioned to illustrate the dilemma facing native populations. Mercury contamination of lakes and rivers has had devastating social, economic and health effects, the Commission learned. Commercial fishing for profit has ended and fishing for one's dinner is unwise. Tourism has suffered from the understandably adverse publicity given mercury-contaminated waters. In turn, guiding, another once major source of income for native residents, has been negatively affected.

At present, most people in Ontario north of 50 live in an economically depressed condition. Government transfer payments have become a way of life for people who once flourished and were self-sufficient in a demanding environment. To complicate matters further, some of the native people in communities affected by mercury pollution face the possibility of a crippling and mind-wasting disease if they continue to maintain the fish diet that has nourished them in the past.

Negative conditions turn life upside down

Despair under present conditions in the north is understandable. Alcoholism in the north seems born out of that despair. Among the most devastating, long-term, social by-products of economic development in the north, is the increase in alcohol addiction among native peoples. Its prevalence is a heart-breaking commentary on a way of life turned upside down.

There are causes other than economic for alcoholism in the north. The lack of social amenities, the dullness of isolation, play into a mood of depression. Not only native people find themselves trapped in cycles of drinking and self-degradation, non-natives are similarly affected. Even to detached professional observers, the social breakdown in some communities and the abuse of alcohol is seen as overwhelming.

While social dislocations caused by large-scale development touch nearly everyone in the north, the Commission was told that women were possibly more painfully affected than men. Limited social and cultural outlets, the high costs of living, the inadequacy of support services, the lack of jobs, all contribute to the physical and mental burdens carried by northern women, both native and non-native. Additional strains are imposed on those women, recently arrived, adjusting to a new and strange community.

Among the hoped-for advantages of planned development is the creation of jobs. Unemployment is a problem throughout the north.

In Indian communities, paid employment opportunities are very limited. In other population centres, employment possibilities are affected in number and scope by the usually limited number of employers. In one-industry towns where the sustaining resource is nearly depleted, future employment is an understandable pre-occupation.

Native people come to the job market at an even greater disadvantage than the unemployed of other cultures. Their job skills, and their very way of life, do not allow them to be easily absorbed into industrial work.

Young people, if they want to find employment opportunities appropriate to their education and skill levels, frequently must move away from their home areas, even though they might wish to stay.

Looking to the future when the employment picture might be brightened by increased development prospects, some northerners are apprehensive that environmental harm might follow. Controls to protect the environment and its undeveloped resources for their children were advocated by many northerners who seek an influential role for themselves in the decision-making process.

Addressing the Commission, a Treaty # 9 chief, wary of the social impacts of development, seemed to speak for all northerners when he called for:

"... equality of opportunity ... the opportunity to use the skills and knowledge that we have in order to make a living, the opportunity to learn the skills that we do not have in order to become self-sufficient ... the opportunity to teach our children what we think is important, the opportunity to retain our culture, our language, and the things that are important to us, the opportunity to live the way we want to live, choosing wisely which additions from the south will benefit our lives ... We want to be consulted ... and being consulted does not mean being informed. It means being listened to and being heard. If the government had only listened to half of the things we had said, our children would be in a lot better shape than they are today. And so I plead with you for our grandchildren to come. If the south does not choose to deal with the questions of survival, at least give us the opportunity to do so."

(Chief Saul Fiddler, Sandy Lake, p. 2421)



Cultural Concerns Require “A Leap of Understanding”

All developments in the north affect two or more cultures — Euro-Canadian and native. Values, attitudes and languages differ. The impact of development on indigenous cultures can be harmful, indeed disastrous. But need such a negative result occur? Can development be designed so that cultural differences do not lead to cultural degradation? To what extent can the record of past experiences be useful in avoiding social upheaval in designing the future?

Which Values and What Developments?

Cultural differences between northerners were obvious throughout the hearings of the Royal Commission. Many native people had difficulty in expressing their views in English or through an interpreter, particularly when trying to illustrate a point through expounding a legend or relating an actual experience.

White people had less language difficulty in relating their experiences of life in the north. Many declared themselves to be natives of the north in their own right, and resented any suggestion from others that they were not.

One long-time resident of the north described Indian and non-Indian natives of the north as dissident voices of frontier Ontario experience, each counterpointing the other as would the call of a loon over the incessant humming of a motorboat, dissident because of the lack of a shared understanding of what the north should be like and how its people should relate to their environment and each other.

Acceptance and endorsement of “controlled development” ran through almost every presentation at the Royal Commission hearings. However, the phrase “controlled development” impressed the Commission as having different meanings for different people.

In the view of many northerners, government and private initiatives in northern Ontario have consistently reflected southern values.

No speaker at the hearings, native or non-native, supported the old style of development — the “extract and move on” approach. Yet no answers acceptable to everyone surfaced in the discussions about northern developments.

In its Interim Report of April 4, 1978, the Royal Commission on the Northern Environment had noted the impracticability of dealing with the various issues separately and at random, as though the successful resolution of one would lead to the successful resolution of another. This might be a useful approach if all persons living in northern Ontario were committed to a single understanding of life, but it was precisely this condition which was absent. There was no consensus among northerners about the future and the Commission was given to understand that Ontario must face this fact and its implications.

Learn from Each Other—Message of the North

While northerners as a whole have much in common, there are areas of potential conflict between groups as well. Yet both the universalities and the differences are based on cultural concerns.

A non-native, who has learned to understand and appreciate the Indian way of life and world view, attempted to explain the differences between the contrasting cultures to the Commission. She felt that a non-native as a rule was more individualistic than an Indian who:

"... seems to see himself first of all as a member of a group or a community of people and secondly as an individual. And he does not see himself as separate from his environment. There are not the same 'ego boundaries' between himself and the environment that we have, so destruction of his environment is an assault on his self."

(Linda Pelton, Sioux Lookout, p. 301)

The speaker also stressed the difficulty a non-native must overcome in order to begin to comprehend what native people are about:

"I think it takes a tremendous flexibility of the mind; it requires being able to really turn your head around and see something from a very different point of view."

(Linda Pelton, Sioux Lookout, p. 301)

If the effort is made, however, and that "leap of understanding" successful, it becomes evident that the two cultures have a lot to learn from each other. The Ontario Federation of Labour told the Commission that:

"We admire their (native people) spirit, their love for their land, and their respect for the environment. We feel we have much to learn from them, if it is not already too late."

(Ontario Federation of Labour, Kenora, p. 2660)

Native people spoke of the respect Indians hold for their elders, and contrasted this with the situation in non-native society:

"It has been a tradition of our people that the elders in the community hold the highest respect from the younger people and it has been carried on for generations. We have lost all these things due to the fast progress of society, but we are going back to these lifestyles now. In your society (non-native) when people ... get old, past the age of 65, the children are anxious

to put them away in the old folks homes. Coffins and flowers have been prepared and land has been set aside for their going away. It is not like this in our community. Our elders have the wealth of knowledge and all the things that go with it and we hold them in the highest regard. We use them right to the departing day."

(Chief Wallace McKay, Osaburgh, p. 1782)

Understanding the humanity of Indian culture makes it easier to understand their spirituality. As a speaker from Treaty # 3 described it to the Commission, Indian people operate on:

"A different level of consciousness."

(Peter Kelly, Toronto, p. 2192)

A young Indian woman told the Commission:

"I can think but I do it in silence. I can speak but only when necessary, and I can feel."

(Roberta Keesick, Kenora, p. 2681)

At the hearings, native people spoke in their own language, translated by an interpreter, or spoke in English as their second language. The Commission was told how difficult the latter effort was and how much listeners were missing in not understanding the Indian point of view as expressed in Cree or Ojibway:

"The only regret that I have in our presentations is that you are not able to understand our first language."

(Chief Andrew Rickard, Moosonee, p. 3082)

The importance of language and its relation to native culture was also stressed:

"The Ojibway language is a very great language and blends with a natural relationship with the Universe. In it are naturalistic and humanistic concepts to give us the meaning that relate to human and natural behaviour, but with far more expression than many other languages. The power of speech is a great gift, and serves as a messenger of the spirits. For the first part, it acknowledges that man has these things to do in his lifetime. When the language dies, the ways of living dies with it. Sadly such a passing of time goes unnoticed."

(Chief Gabriel Meecham, Geraldton, p. 1361)

The Indian languages are highly indicative of native spirituality and much is revealed through the words the people use. For example, the word which native people use to describe themselves, Anishnawbe, has a very profound meaning:

"Anishnawbe in our language means to be unworthy or insignificant and this philosophical orientation is to be humble, so Anishnawbe means the humble people before the eyes of the Great Spirit."

(Peter Kelly, Toronto, p. 2190)

The people of Treaty #9 emphasized as indissoluble their bond to the land, referring to themselves as the Anishnawbe-Aski, the people and the land:

"The land is the people; people cannot survive without the land."

(Deer Lake Community, Sandy Lake, p. 2401)

Several northerners urged the Commission to listen closely to native people:

"I think they have something to tell us, and we should listen. You cannot live for long on top of this environment, which is what white people do as a rule. You have to learn to live in it and with it, which is what the Indians traditionally have done."

(Millie Barrett, Geraldton, p. 1415)

Non-native northerners can also feel an attachment to the land:

"The people who belong here, whether they are born here or are here by choice, will tell you that it isn't so much that they chose this land but that the land chose them. The land, the bush, is the arbiter of everything here. The bush imposes a certain respect, a certain humility, a certain healthy tempering of human arrogance. And it promotes a certain competence, an ability to deal with the essentials, to cope with harsh realities among those who belong here."

(Millie Barrett, Geraldton, p. 1403)

The Commission was left with little doubt that northerners consider themselves different from those who live in other parts of Ontario:

"Remarkable and inspiring are the fortitude, tenacity, patience and plain courage of the northern people and the way they had to cope. Northerners have developed into a breed unto themselves."

(J. Edwin Fahlgren, Red Lake, p. 627)

The Northern Ontario Heritage Party elaborated:

"The geographic, historic, cultural, economic and political differences between northern Ontario and southern Ontario cannot be hidden or ignored. The unique identity and character of northern Ontario and its people has survived and even grown during the years."

(Northern Ontario Heritage Party, Timmins, p. 1038)

Non-native northerners through their spokespeople declared themselves as much a part of the north as the native people:

"Many of the residents of these communities have lived here all their lives, and there are many second and third generation residents whose forebears were among the original settlers of this region."

(Cochrane Board of Trade, Timmins, p. 1133)

One speaker felt the two cultures had much to give each other:

"The Indian culture . . . has a great many things to offer us for which we ourselves are quite openly seeking answers . . . a healthier approach to the handling of grief and death, a more personal approach to the delivery of health care, a more sane view of man's relationship to his environment, and a more appropriate way of relating to past offenders against society . . . We are good at the management of physical things and in the creation of tools to assist us in our life. When we are at our best, and not mindlessly destroying the world around us, we do create some marvelous inventions which enrich our lives together."

(Rev. Stuart Harvey, Kenora, p. 2747)

A special point was made that understanding between the indigenous population and those more recently settled in the north is often lacking. Native people, particularly, seem to feel the effects of the resulting limited understanding:

"A lot of people question what our contributions are in society. Historians have failed to acknowledge these areas of our contribution. We tried with extreme difficulty to forget what happened yesterday . . . We are branded with every imaginable term by the oppressors . . . Every time we come out to speak and discuss how we feel about the environment and the land, we are told: 'How dare you speak? Why are you so militant? Are you not satisfied with all the things we are providing for you?'"

(Treaty #9, Timmins, p. 1119)



Yet, both natives and non-natives expressed similar views about development:

"Mr. Commissioner, we have been falsely accused of being opposed to any kind of development, and wishing to return to some 16th century setting which can never be recovered. We reject that concept. We oppose uncontrolled development that diminishes people and views the environment as a problem to be solved, as damages to be minimized in the relentless search for more and more non-renewable resources. We oppose that kind of development that exists for the profits and pleasures of a few people, most of whom live outside the north."

(Treaty # 9, Sioux Lookout, p. 89)

The option to maintain their own lifestyle is an important one to native people, as many of them sense that the values of the dominant society have gone astray. A psychiatrist working in the north attempted to articulate this feeling:

"It is not surprising that the young native quickly realizes that a workable adaption to the white man's complex society will demand of him a brain-washing which could threaten his emotional stability."

(Dr. Gerald Greenbaum, Toronto, p. 2093)

Or, as Millie Barrett put it:

"It is not proper or fruitful to adjust to something that is less than good . . . they (native people) are conscious of a certain malaise, a certain feeling of detachment, of unreality, about what we've been asking them to 'adjust' to."

(Millie Barrett, Geraldton, p. 1415)

What the Indian people asked of the Royal Commission was what all northerners have made their case for many years — involvement in the planning and decisions affecting their lives:

"We want honesty and justice from both governments, to be recognized as humans, and we want the right also to have a voice in the decision-making on proposals and projects that will affect us in our way of living, living in peace and harmony with nature."

(Attawapiskat Band, Moose Factory, p. 3233)

Recognition by speakers of the importance of understanding the cultural differences underlying their common needs appeared as the beginnings of wisdom at Commission hearings. As the Anti-Mercury Ojibway Group (A-MOG) told the Commission:

"Deeply felt divisions exist in the north today . . . Unpleasant truths must be faced . . . Only by a full comprehension of these divisions and the facts on which they are based can understanding and perhaps even accommodation begin."

(A-MOG, Whitedog, p. 2833)

A similar sentiment was expressed by the Improvement District of Pickle Lake:

"It is our feeling that unless the two groups can start communicating with each other . . . northwestern Ontario is in for some real trouble in years to come."

(Improvement District of Pickle Lake, Pickle Lake, p. 1674)

Mercury Pollution—A Northern Tragedy

Mercury pollution of the English-Wabigoon River system was one of the concerns that led to the establishment of the Royal Commission on the Northern Environment. The dissemination of mercury waste was raised by native people at the hearings as constituting a threat to human health and the natural environment, as well as being a factor in the social and economic demise of their communities. Not all northerners were as upset as most. Some argued that the mercury menace had been exaggerated by media exploitation.

A Public Issue Since 1970

A phrase associated with Alice in Wonderland, “as mad as a hatter”, does actually describe the very real effects of mercury on the central nervous system, ranging from palsy to psychosis.

The observation grew out of the use of mercury in the manufacture of hats in 19th century Britain. While the dangers of mercury have long been known, the metal has continued to be employed in various forms in industrial processes, including those used for a time at the paper mill in Dryden, Ontario.

Mounting alarm over mercury pollution led, in 1970, to closure of commercial fishing in the English-Wabigoon River system on which the Dryden mill is located. Two Ojibway communities, Whitedog and Grassy Narrows, are situated downstream. Slowly, information had filtered down to these people that they may be faced with an ongoing health hazard in addition to the social chaos caused by the abrupt curtailment of their main source of livelihood.

Through the next few years, the people of the two Indian reserves witnessed an increase of violence and disintegration in their communities. This exaggerated tendency towards violence is one of the medically known effects of mercury contamination, as well as being a social product of the turmoil created when communities lose their source of income. In Grassy Narrows, a community of approximately 500, there was a violent death every month for a period of two years.

When the company, whose mill at Dryden was alleged to have contaminated the river system with mercury, proposed to increase its logging operations north of 50 and build another pulp mill at Ear Falls or Red Lake, public reaction was widespread. Opponents were outraged by what they saw as government granting the last remaining virgin timber stand to one of the most notorious polluters in the province. The public outcry led directly to the establishment of a commission of inquiry into the proposed scheme. Through the urgings of Treaty #9 and others, the commission's mandate was expanded and it became the Royal Commission on the Northern Environment.

Under the circumstances of its newsworthiness and immediacy, it was inevitable that mercury pollution would be a major topic in the Commission's hearings.

Whitedog and Grassy Narrows—Forlorn Communities

Mercury contamination of the English-Wabigoon River system (and its effects on the communities of Whitedog and Grassy Narrows) was not a new problem when it was brought before the Commission. It was almost eight years since the people affected had begun to seek some sort of recognition and response to the anguish mercury contamination had brought to them.

Early in its hearings the Commission heard a brief submission from the Anti-Mercury Ojibway Group (A-MOG)¹ sketching the impacts of mercury pollution on Whitedog and Grassy Narrows, and asking that the Commissioner visit those communities:

“Mercury waste discharged into our waterways has had devastating effects on our lives. Life in much of those waterways has been wiped out. Fish became the carriers of deadly poison and our people have suffered the consequences — both physical and social. In a Thunder Bay hospital lies a small boy who was born blind, deformed and retarded. No one knows if he is a victim of mercury poisoning. His family suspects that he is, because his mother was a heavy fish eater when she was carrying him. We do not want to argue whether or not that particular boy is a mercury poisoning victim. But we know that that boy is an example of what a mercury victim looks like. I urge you to visit that boy in Thunder Bay. Only then will you begin to understand the terrible shadow hanging over our communities because of the crippling consequences associated with mercury contamination. At present we are all too familiar with the social consequences of mercury pollution. Our commercial fishing has been outlawed and men have been put out of work. Our jobs as fishing guides have been drastically cut back. Mercury poisoning has ripped apart the social fabric of our communities. You will learn much of this first hand when you visit us at Whitedog and Grassy Narrows, and talk to our people.”

(A-MOG, Dryden, p. 423)

¹Amog in Ojibway means “a swarm of stinging bees.”

The Commission did visit Whitedog and Grassy Narrows, and held a hearing at Whitedog. There the saga of what mercury pollution has meant to the communities was outlined. The first blow came when, in 1970, commercial fishing was banned on the English-Wabigoon River system. This was a disaster for a people who depend for much of their livelihood on the proceeds from commercial fishing. Apart from this, the mercury contaminated the communities' traditional food source.

What the residents stressed was that fishing was much more than a source of income to them. It was, in fact, a total way of life. In discussing the banning of commercial fishing A-MOG stated that:

“For us this was not simply a loss of economic livelihood. It represented the loss of our lifestyle. For our people, commercial fishing was a way of life. Day in and day out our men placed their nets in traditional

fishing grounds. The catches of pike and walleye were sold to buyers from Kenora. Each day the women would fix the nets for the next day's catch. Family life revolved around commercial fishing year in and year out. Now this is gone.”

(A-MOG, Whitedog, p. 2821)

The government's response to mercury pollution troubled many people. Why should there be a ban on commercial fishing yet the river remain open to sport fishermen?

“Why, we ask, are tourist camps operating and guests fishing and consuming fish while Indians sit unemployed due to the provincial ban on commercial fishing? Why had the federal government Department of Health and Welfare advised the Indians in 1975 in letters to each band member — ‘The fish in the river system around your reserve still contain high levels of mercury. There is no amount of fish that can be considered safe to eat. You are strongly advised not to eat any local fish at all.’ The tourists eat the fish — no warning is given. Yet the province bans commercial fishing and the federal Department of Health advises the Indians not to eat the fish at all.”

(Charles Wagamese, Whitedog, p. 2772)

The only warning that sport fishermen received was the “Fish for Fun” posters that were posted along the river system in the summer of 1970. Peter Kelly of Treaty #3 pointed out that:

“My people do not primarily fish for sport or fish for fun. That is why the announcement in 1970 that fish in parts of northerwestern Ontario were loaded with mercury, and people should not eat them but only fish for fun, was a cruel joke on the people. Indians fish to live. Only sports fishermen fish solely for fun, as you would in a penny arcade.”

(Treaty #3, Kenora, p. 2864)

While the river has officially remained open to tourists some tourist camps have closed down, in recognition of the potential health hazards. Barney Lamm's Ball Lake Lodge was the largest and best equipped in the area and was the major employer of Grassy Narrows people, employing between 120-130 annually. When it closed, the loss of employment, especially in guiding, was substantial. However, those lodges which did remain open presented a tricky situation for those seeking employment. The Grassy Narrows brief explained that:

“Other tourist camp operators stayed in business and continued to employ some of our people. Our guides were, and still are, exposed to mercury poisoning. These guides are pressured to participate in the

eating of the fish caught by the tourists and to hide the mercury pollution as much as possible.¹

(Grassy Narrows Reserve, Whitedog, p. 2791)

¹In April 1978, Whitedog and Grassy Narrows reached an agreement with the Kenora District Campowners Association and the Ontario government under which 50 extra fishing guides would be hired from each reserve. Lodge owners would provide the Indian guides with box lunches.

The news media reporting of the mercury contamination of the English-Wabigoon River system has been a blow to the tourist industry in northwestern Ontario. Many people appeared anxious to avoid any publicity. A Kenora man speaking on behalf of the Northwestern Ontario District Progressive Conservative Youth Association, referred to:

" . . . the highly publicized and over-exaggerated mercury pollution issue."

(Northwestern Ontario District Progressive Conservative Youth Association, Kenora, p. 2573)

The tourist industry was particularly upset by the bad publicity that the region had received and the Kenora District Campowners Association stated that:

"In general, the tourist industry across northern Ontario, but particularly northwestern Ontario, has been victimized by negative public relations plus the lack of a constructive program to combat this adverse publicity. I am referring to mercury, forest fires, exchange rates, border crossing problems and gas prices. These are bad enough by themselves but when you add political exploitation by politicians during elections, an over-reaction by some media, publicity campaigns by individuals and pressure groups, you can severely hurt and damage the overall tourist programs in the north."

(Kenora District Campowners Association, Kenora, p. 2721)

Perhaps the most outraged attack on the media came from a doctor in Ear Falls who stated that during the last provincial election:

"We heard from such sensationalistic media people as Warner Troyer, Adrienne Clarkson of the Fifth Estate, Soles and Finlayson of Take Thirty, out of Toronto, virtually that the north was synonymous with mercury pollution, Grassy Narrows is a swear word . . . We heard that a team of Japanese doctors had been invited to research our problems and that evidence of Minimata Disease was on every hand."

(Dr. Harrison Maynard, Ear Falls, p. 825)

Observing that people seemed to have mistaken the town crier as the man responsible for the plague, one journalist responded:

"There is . . . the suggestion that people who have pointed out the nature of the mercury problem are hurting all of northwest Ontario, penalizing the innocent by giving the area a 'bad name'. It is, sir, the mercury contamination which is the source of the evil tidings, not the reporters of its existence. And the innocent — all of them — would immediately begin to be spared if the government closed the affected waterways to sports fishing. Then anyone wishing to holiday and fish in this area would know, that in any waters on which they were allowed to fish, they were safe from the crippling killer known as Minimata Disease. Of course, sports fishermen who have learned they are not being warned of dangers where they are known to exist will shy away from any associated area."

(Warner Troyer, Kenora, p. 2630)

Many native people shared the view that the total closing of the river to fishing was a major goal:

"First and foremost is our campaign to close the river system. Only if all fishing on the river system is stopped will our people be finally free of the threat of further mercury poisoning. We have carried our campaign to every audience we can think of. We have talked to the federal government, the provincial government, joint committees, the media, and so on. We are met constantly with a passing of responsibility to someone else. No one claims to have the authority to shut the river system down and the willingness to discuss with us whether this should be done."

(A-MOG, Whitedog, p. 2825)

The band councils of the two communities, however, did not call for closure of the river system to sport fishing. They called, instead, for aid from industry and government in rehabilitating those communities:

"In situations where industry, provincial agencies, provincial ministries have a significant role in disrupting any community, that a jointly funded agreement designed to rebuild the social and economic fabric be undertaken . . . That the province, federal government and industry in question provide employment opportunities and on-the-job training programs as part of each development, for the Indian people in the region."

(Islington Band, Whitedog, p. 2780)

A common theme running through the native people's presentation was their frustration with a government which, they claimed, had refused to accept responsibility or take any action to improve the situation created by mercury contamination:

"The Ontario government has refused to accept responsibility in a meaningful way for social and economic reconstruction at Whitedog. The province has advised the bands that to obtain compensation, they must, on their own, take court action against Reed Ltd."

(Islington Band, Whitedog, p. 2779)

And:

"In discussing the causes and consequences of this disaster, how is it that the two levels of government, provincial and federal, have so successfully managed to pass the buck to each other in an attempt to avoid responsibility?"

(A-MOG, Whitedog, p. 2824)

According to the Islington Band Council, Reed has not been any more willing to accept responsibility than the government:

"Since the early 1970's when the damage of industrial pollution in the English-Wabigoon River system became public knowledge, Reed Ltd. has continued to deny responsibility. On occasion Reed Ltd. has argued that the mercury levels could result from natural mercury sources — a claim which is obviously ludicrous to those with any knowledge of mercury levels. Reed has made no effort to assist Whitedog in any way whatsoever."

(Islington Band, Whitedog, p. 2779)

A-MOG had questions that it felt answers were needed for:

"Why did their use of mercury go on so long, long after everyone was aware of its lethal dangers? . . . How is it that industry can operate without any effective early warning system for environmental pollution?"

(A-MOG, Whitedog, p. 2823)

A Kenora resident, Ted Hall, echoed the same sentiment at the Kenora hearings:

"This was a known pollutant that was swept under the rug and I think if people had been minding their pollution they might have found mercury much sooner."

(Ted Hall, Kenora, p. 2846)

Ed Deibel, leader of the Northern Ontario Heritage Party, also lamented the stupidity of suffering a problem which could have been avoided:

"The total effect of mercury pollution on the native people and the economy of northern Ontario is serious and politically stupid because we have the laws; the laws are not being enforced . . . The poor record of protection of our environment is hindering future development of northern Ontario because a growing number of people in northern Ontario are saying 'We don't want any more pollution', and Your Honour I want to really stress this point, that the poor record of the protecting of our environment is really hindering future development of northern Ontario."

(Northern Ontario Heritage Party, Timmins, p. 1030)

The Commission was told of a number of Indian people who had symptoms that could be caused by mercury poisoning. Yet doctors gave differing explanations and politicians seemed evasive. A-MOG described one possible victim, Matthew Beaver:

"Matthew Beaver of the Grassy Narrows Band registered 350 parts per billion mercury in his blood¹ in November 1975. He had trouble with his speech, cramps in his jaws, numbness in his tongue. His vision was deteriorating. Matthew is 34 years of age. Once a pro hockey prospect. The damage to his nervous system is now obvious. For him, mercury poisoning is an everpresent and tragic way of life."

(A-MOG, Whitedog, p. 2820)

¹The acceptable level of mercury in human blood is 20 parts per billion. Twenty to 100 parts per billion indicates increasing risk. Over 100 parts per billion indicates a person at risk.

A-MOG presented evidence from Dr. John Pritchard of the University of Toronto and the Hospital for Sick Children which came from his latest report on Health and Welfare Canada. In it he stated that Matthew Beaver's tremor was likely caused by methyl mercury, the likelihood being two on a scale of zero to three.

(A-MOG, Whitedog, p. 2834)

Perhaps most frightening for the members of the two bands is the possibility of congenital mercury poisoning, whereby an unborn child can develop mercury poisoning from mercury in the mother's circulatory system. The child mentioned earlier by A-MOG is thought to be a victim of congenital mercury poisoning. His father, Marcel Pahpasay, spoke to the Commission through a translator:

"He (Pahpasay) had asked the doctors what exactly was it that happened to his child and he was given several and different explanations. At one point he was told that this was a result of fish contamination; secondly, he was told by a doctor in Thunder Bay that it was a result of alcohol; and then . . . by a doctor in Grassy Narrows, he was told that it was a disease which could not be exactly diagnosed."

(Marcel Pahpasay, Whitedog, p. 2812)

While the band members seem convinced that Marcel Pahpasay's son is a victim of congenital mercury poisoning, authorities have not acknowledged the case as such. Warner Troyer discussed his opinions as to the Ontario government's treatment of the situation:

"When a possible case of congenital Minimata Disease was located in March 1976, for example, and we've just seen a video-tape report of that case, Dr. Bette Stephenson, then acting Health Minister, told Queen's Park reporters that description of the boy as a possible victim of congenital Minimata Disease was irresponsible since, first, he had a very low mercury blood level

at age five, and, second, he was a victim of cerebral palsy. The Hon. Minister, a former president of the Canadian Medical Association, failed to add that: a) the child had been institutionalized for more than two years so that, having eaten no contaminated fish during that time, any high blood levels at birth or before would long since have disappeared; or, b) that 'cerebral palsy' is a grab-bag medical description for any brain damage occurring shortly before or after birth, — a precise though simplified description of congenital Minimata Disease."

(Warner Troyer, Kenora, p. 2618)

Dr. Brian Russell, in charge of newborn service at the Lake of the Woods District Hospital, has been doing tests of mercury levels in newborn infants. He stated that:

"In the three years that I have been involved with the study at the Lake of the Woods District Hospital, I can safely say that yes, there is too much methyl mercury, but I have yet to see and yet to have presented to me a definite case of congenital Minimata poisoning . . . I still feel the potential threat is there but I, as yet, am not prepared to acknowledge that there is definite poisoning."

(Dr. Brian Russell, Kenora, p. 2700)

Nevertheless, the native people are not satisfied that mercury poisoning is not a reality in their communities; and neither is Warner Troyer. He attacked the stance taken by Dr. Bette Stephenson, the Hon. George Kerr, the Hon. John Munro and the Hon. Leo Bernier, saying:

"I might refer all of them to Dr. Dennis Wheatley, the man in charge of the Ottawa health department (federal Department of Health) efforts in this field for the past five years, who stated publicly and for the record, last May, that in his view there was no longer any question about the definite presence of Minimata Disease among Indians at Whitedog and Grassy Narrows."

(Warner Troyer, Kenora, p. 2622)

People felt that the truth was being kept from them:

"How is it that the medical testing to which we are subjected time and time again is conducted without consultation with us and without any release to us of the data which is gathered?"

(A-MOG, Whitedog, p. 2824)

Frustration was widespread:

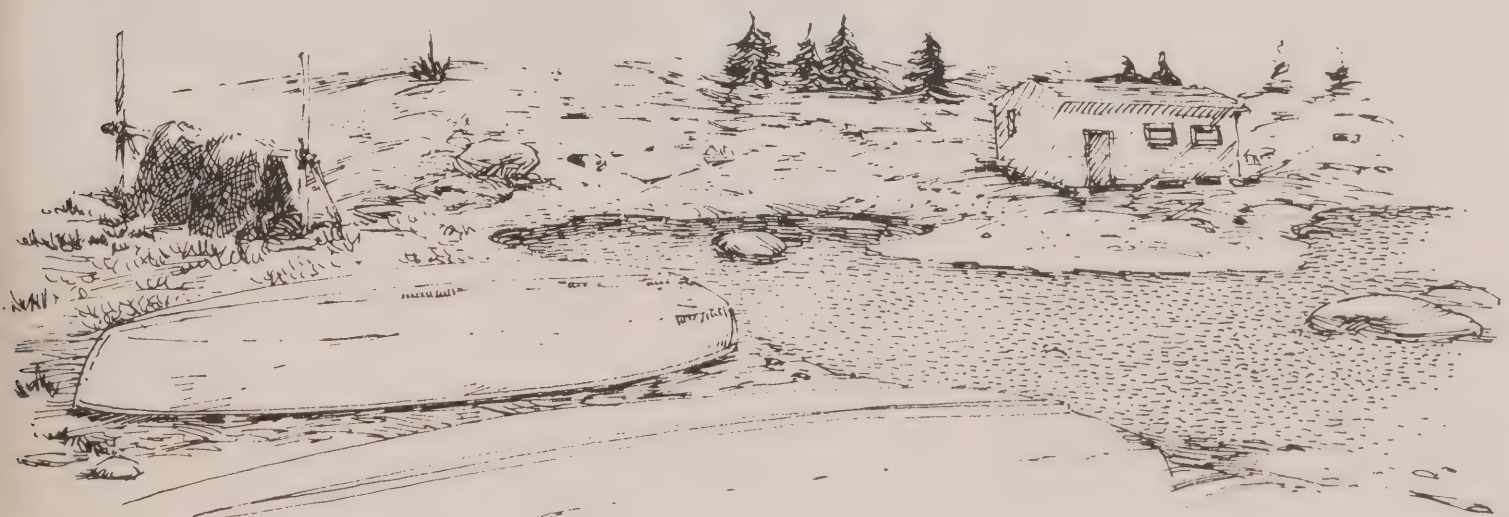
"The federal and provincial governments have consistently attempted to belittle our mercury problems to the public. They have ignored their own reports which say the poisoned river should be closed down; they've ignored the testimony of experts that state mercury has bludgeoned the social, economic and physical health of my people."

(A-MOG, Whitedog, p. 2835)

From A-MOG came the most impassioned plea that the issue be faced:

"Our story will not always be pleasant. Most of it is tragic. It may not bring people together. However, we urge you, Mr. Commissioner, not to turn away from our story for this reason. Deeply felt divisions exist in the north today. For your Commission to hear about these divisions and the facts on which they are based will not make these divisions worse. Equally, if your Commission were to disband tomorrow these divisions would not go away. Unpleasant truths must be faced. To ignore them is to delude ourselves and everyone else. Only by a full comprehension of these divisions and the facts on which they are based can understanding and perhaps even accommodation begin. The divisions in the north, indeed the divisions relating to mercury are sharp and even bitter. We wish to face these divisions honestly and openly."

(A-MOG, Whitedog, p. 2833)





High Costs—A Disincentive to Living in the North

Remoteness from major supply centres and the severity and length of winter continue to be the major factors in boosting the prices of nearly all commodities needed in the north. It costs more to heat your house, drive your car or snowmobile and buy your food in northern Ontario. Northerners recommended that the provincial government consider tax policies and action to help offset some of these costs.

A Conundrum: Lower Incomes—Higher Costs

Northerners maintain that most disadvantages that accompany living in the north are more than offset by the benefits of residing in a beautiful, soul-satisfying part of the province. To most, the price of remoteness, however, can be too costly, and northerners addressing the Commission were adamant that the provincial government should work to correct the imbalance. It should be possible for the provincial government, they told the Royal Commission, to set policies in motion to help correct some of the financial disadvantages of living in the outlying settlements of northern Ontario.

Contrasting the high and rising cost of living against the depressed earning base of their communities was an issue of paramount concern to northerners. It was explained that prices, in fact, reflected not only the steep cost of bringing goods from supply centres in the south but also the disadvantages of small bulk purchasing for far-scattered communities.

Northerners maintained that goods cost them more chiefly because transportation costs are higher per kilometer than in the south. They also recognized that transportation costs continue to climb as fuel prices generally increase.

Most speakers agreed that a key factor elevating the cost of living in the north was the small size of the region's population and its dispersal over such a vast area. Northerners conceded that with a head count of some 30,000 (equivalent to a medium-size town) spread across 214,000 square miles (larger than many countries), distribution of goods becomes difficult and expensive.

The few attempts made by government to help redress the economic imbalance, e.g., charging less for provincial vehicle licences, were viewed as inadequate. Many said that they would prefer to pay southern rates for licences if they could enjoy the lower southern rates for gasoline. A particular irritant to northerners was the fact that alcohol prices, set by the provincial liquor board, were identical throughout the province, yet fuel prices were not.

The availability and price of commodities in northern Ontario were a matter of concern for all residents. Groceries, transportation, recreation — all cost far more than they do in the south. It is not uncommon for people visiting in southern Ontario to compare prices and to stock up on staple goods to take back north with them, everything from denture cleansers to machine parts. Some northerners spoke of the danger of rising costs and lower and disappearing incomes to the social fabric of northern communities. The Commission was asked whether infusion of new industrial development could help stave off such dangers, and what part government could play in reducing the additional financial burden borne by northerners.

“Equalizers” Advocated to Help Bridge Disparities

The high financial cost of living in the north reflects in part the severity of the climate and length of the winter (more heating fuel is needed for a longer period of the year), and great distances (more gasoline, diesel and aircraft fuel is needed to transport people and goods), and the sparse scattered populations (markets are reduced):

“Well, you know the cost of living up here is expensive, and we have different conditions up here and it’s a hell of a lot colder, conditions are grimmer than down south and as a small businessman, I would think that it costs perhaps a third to half more to operate a small business. You take for instance, we have no facilities for parts, if you have even a minor breakdown, so you need a \$5.00 part and our best place is either Winnipeg or Thunder Bay and we have to get that in by airplane so that \$5.00 part right off the bat costs us \$8.00 for freight.”

(Stan Werbiski, Pickle Lake, p. 1743)

The most common complaint heard was in regard to the price of gasoline as compared with other areas:

“The price of gas around here is a ripoff. Some people pay 70¢ a gallon to run their cars while we pay \$1.05 to \$1.10 or more. An investigation of energy prices should be carried out.”

(Doreen Heinrichs and Dana Robbins, Red Lake, p. 527)

Part of the reason for the high cost of fuel was felt to be directly attributable to government inattention to the needs of the north. The Commission was told in Red Lake:

“We here in Red Lake — 310 miles by road from the Winnipeg refineries — pay the highest rates for gasoline and heating oil in the province . . . Our government . . . allows the oil companies to shaft us by pricing the products . . . at the Sarnia price plus freight from Sarnia to Red Lake — 1300 miles . . . Here in the north we have to subsidize the price paid by our counterparts in southern Ontario and Quebec.”

(J. Edwin Fahlgren, Red Lake, p. 633)

Complaints were voiced about the high price of food, enhanced by transportation costs:

“A survey conducted in 1975 in conjunction with a CBC program, Market Place, revealed that food prices in Geraldton ranked third highest in Canada, outdone only by Newfoundland and communities much farther north. A distinction in which the residents do not take pride. Transportation costs are responsible for these higher prices.”

(John Evans, Geraldton, p. 1433)

An unwanted corollary of high costs is the sales tax multiplier, i.e., northerners not only pay an increased price for goods but must also pay sales tax on that increase:

“We are paying more sales tax because of the price of the freight and the price of the article we are buying. You pay the sales tax on that so we are really getting ripped off.”

(Stan Werbiski, Pickle Lake, p. 1744)

The prices paid in the larger northern communities are higher than those paid in the south, but this discrepancy pales when one contrasts it with the extreme costs incurred by native people in the more remote northerly portions of the area:

“Last week advertised in a Cochrane paper, one bag of 50 pounds of potatoes was \$2.55. At the same week here in Moosonee it was \$11.75 and the gasoline here was \$1.10 a gallon. At Fort Albany it’s \$3.00 a gallon. As you go up to Winisk it’s \$5.00 a gallon and the wages are lower as the prices are going up.”

(Joe Linklater, Moosonee, p. 3214)

“I made a survey before I came down and the price of flour there (Armstrong) is \$5.49 for what we called a 3 or 4 pound bag in the old days, and I don’t know what they call it on the new metric system. And to ship two bags of these would be \$11.00 and shipping by rail would be \$13.00 in addition to your \$11.00 so it is a pretty high rate for them to pay.”

(Armstrong Metis Association, Sioux Lookout, p. 296)

“I have a gas lamp at home, a 300 candle power lamp and I’m paying \$5.28 for a gallon of Coleman fuel which will last about three days. I feel sorry for the white people at Armstrong who have electric power who are crying because they are paying 6-1/4¢ for the electric power.

(Armstrong Metis Association, Sioux Lookout, p. 293)

Isolation and distance from markets mean that not only do the goods cost more, but it is exceedingly difficult and expensive to get to those goods:

“We (Muskat Dam) do not have a store that can cater to most of our needs and most of our shopping is done in Round Lake (Weagamow Lake) which is 37 miles south. To be able to shop in Weagamow Lake we have to charter a Cessna which is based in Weagamow Lake and it costs the shopper \$70.00 for plane charter only.”

(Chief Arthur Beardy, Osnaburgh, p. 1847)

And costs continue to rise:

"Mr. Commissioner, for example, three years ago transportation on a charter basis was \$536.00 from Timmins to Kapuskasing Lake, a distance of 140 miles. A year after, meaning two years from last year, White River Air Services bought out Austin Airways. Prices went up to \$956.00 for one trip. Last year the price . . . was \$1,076.00 one trip."

(Sinclair Cheechoo, Moose Factory, p. 3343)

Both native and non-native groups look to the government to help reduce prices through subsidization or tax relief. If the government can equalize prices for alcohol, surely it can do the same for more important products such as fuel, went the argument:

"Why can't a government that can equalize the price of a case of beer or a bottle of booze across the province do the same thing for gasoline and fuel oil?"

(Don McKelvie, Pickle Lake, p. 1637)

Clearly, people of the north pay more for goods and services than people of the south. Several methods of assistance were recommended:

"In recognition of the disparity of the cost of living special assistance should be considered for those who settle in the north. Costs of goods and services in the early development stage will be extremely high. Transportation and high labour costs also preclude the building of homes by individuals. Cost of food and services for those who live in the north will be much higher than for those in the south. Also the quality of such services will be markedly lower. Recognition should be given to such conditions and relief afforded to those who live there. This assistance could be rendered by a variety of methods; examples would be income tax deductions and partial or complete exemption from sales tax or licencing requirements."

(Griffith Mine, Red Lake, p. 687)

Government subsidization to reduce high transportation costs, they feel, would also prove beneficial:

"We, the Chiefs of James Bay, request . . . that the present transportation subsidy programs be reviewed, with the objective of having a standard price of goods and services in northern communities regardless of geographical location . . . that due to the precedents established by the present subsidy programs involving the Toronto Transit Commission, Air Canada, and the Canadian National Railway, we request that this Inquiry recommend to the federal-provincial governments to assist transportation in the north in a similar manner."

(James Bay Chiefs, Moose Factory, p. 3238)



The northeastern Ontario Municipalities Action Group felt that present government assistance has fallen short:

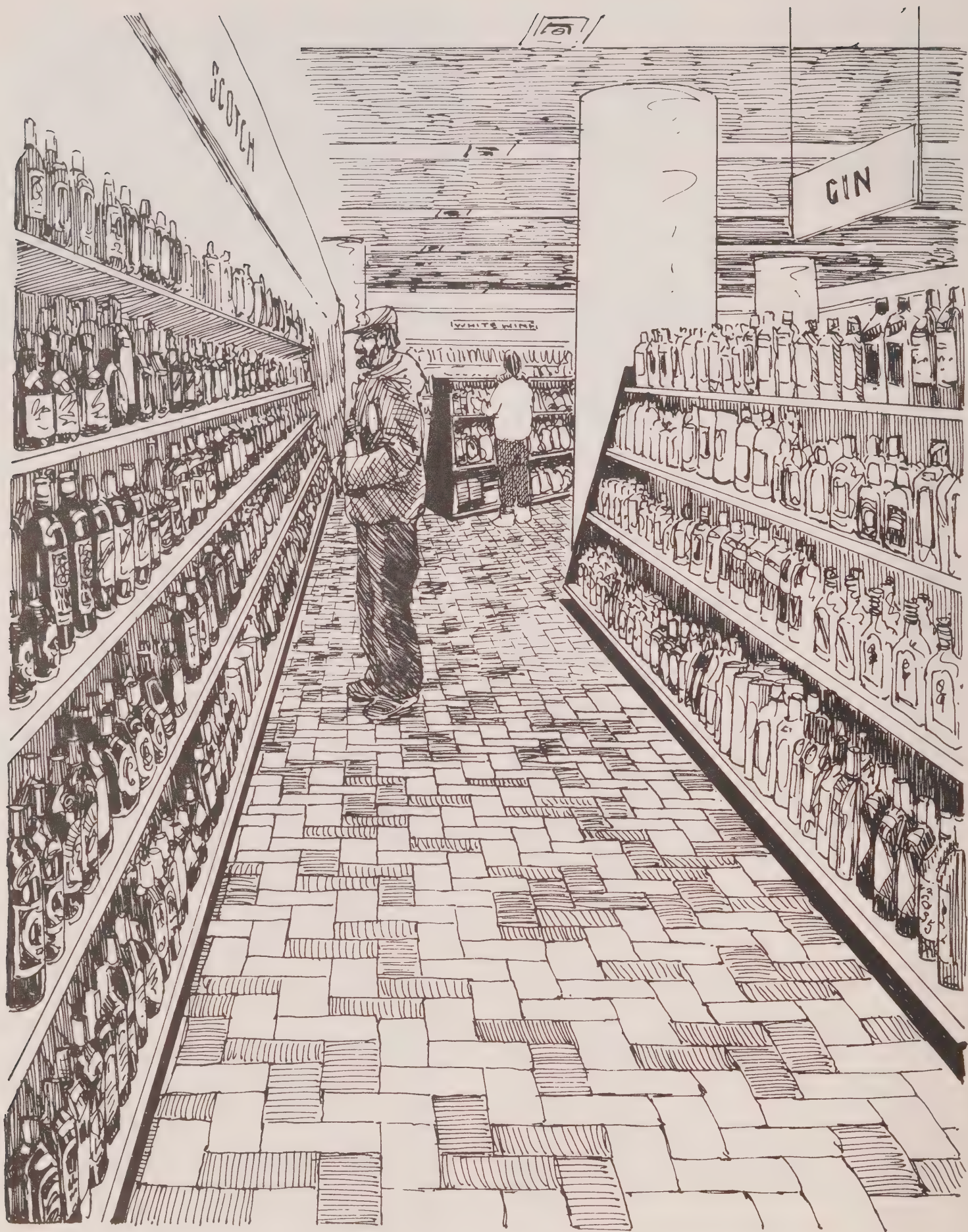
"The Ontario government has recognized the problem of added living costs in the north, which includes the higher costs of transportation and the added provincial sales tax on those additional transportation costs, with the advent of the Northern Ontario Support Grant in 1973, to return some of these added costs in lower municipal taxes. The support grant commenced at 10% of net levy and has progressively increased to 18%. We have seen calculations where the support grant, in actual fact, only covers about one-third of the actual disbenefits of northern living costs . . . We suggest that there should be a fixed relationship between northern costs and the support grant and, that on some type of upgrading formula, that grant should systematically, regardless of the status of the provincial budget, be increased to reach its true level."

(Northeastern Ontario Municipalities Action Group, brief submitted to the R.C.N.E., p. 16)

Northerners recognize that reality dictates higher prices. But they also feel that government can do more for them:

"We accept that there are certain disadvantages to living in this area of the world, and those who do not accept those disadvantages are simply exercising their freedom or right to complain. It is our isolation that helps to drive the price of many things up, and the goods we have to buy, and that quite frequently is something that governments cannot do a great deal about, but they do have an obligation to see that we are not subjected to rip-offs."

(Town of Geraldton, Geraldton, p. 1337)



Alcoholism—A Particular Scourge in the North

In representations to the Commission, alcohol abuse was cited, by both native and non-native northerners, as a distressing problem, difficult to resolve. In resource industry towns, it was asserted that white people turn to alcohol to ease the pain of isolation and the lack of social and intellectual diversions. In the case of native people, the Commission was told many turn to alcohol to dull the confusion and despair of being caught between two worlds. Broken families, illness, violent deaths are often the result.

Alcohol—The Great Disabler

Alcohol was an item and factor in commerce between natives and non-natives since the first days of the fur trade. Its mood-altering capacity was often used to disorient the Indians and to obtain furs from them for a depressed price. But alcohol abuse did not end with the decline of the fur trade.

In the 1950's, native people gained legal access to alcohol. Before 1951, Ontario's laws prohibited the sale of alcoholic beverages to Indians. Following World War II, veterans of Indian descent began questioning why they had been considered good enough to fight for their country yet not able to drink liquor the same as other veterans. The resultant change from interdict to complete freedom was too much for many native people. Addiction, violence, deaths, illness, martial discord and abandoned children became the tragic results of alcohol abuse.

Such tragedies, of course, were also experienced by non-Indian families whose members were affected by excessive alcohol consumption.

When small settlements with few social amenities mushroomed to house the employees of rapidly expanding logging and mining enterprises, the main, if not only, social gatherings were for drinking, mostly in taverns. That is still the way of the north. Very few communities have such facilities as movie theatres or bowling alleys. The primary place for social diversion and companionship is in the local bar.

Alcohol addiction is, of course, a universal tragedy. To the alcoholic, this dependency means days and nights of torment trying to remember what happened the day before, what day it is now. It means looking at one's wife and wondering where she got the black eye. Watching one's children turn their eyes away in shame. Living with an unbearable guilt that sends one right back to the bottle.

The Commission was told that afflicted northerners are seeking a way out of this downward spiral. An increasing number of men and women are turning to self-help groups to combat the loneliness and isolation they feel.

Native people spoke of combining the Alcoholics Anonymous philosophy with their traditional beliefs in order to gain strength from the Great Spirit. Yet improvements in living conditions and social amenities are probably the factors most likely to reduce unacceptably high levels of alcoholism in the north.

Alcoholic Haze Clouds Much of Life for Many

Use and abuse of alcohol, the most commonly known and ingested mood-altering drug, is increasing in all parts of the province, but particularly in northwestern Ontario. From 1969 to 1974, alcohol consumption was 50% higher in the District of Kenora than in the rest of the province.

(Addiction Research Foundation, Kenora, p. 2927)

Most of the references to liquor consumption made at the hearings linked alcoholism with native people; but it is a non-native problem as well. The written submission of the Addiction Research Foundation (ARF) stated:

"While there is no denying that the public order and health problems related to heavy consumption are more obvious among members of the native than among the non-native population, the statistics at least suggest that heavy consumption is generally tolerated in the northwest. Furthermore, the native people constitute too small a group to explain the overall excess of the alcohol consumption and related damage in the northwest over the rest of the province."

(Addiction Research Foundation, brief submitted to the R.C.N.E., p. 12)

Excessive alcohol has well-documented adverse effects on the individual who ingests it. The most far-reaching deleterious effects, however, are on the family and social fabric. Instances are countless of people who become drunk, get into fights, beat their spouses or children, fall asleep in a snowbank, forget to tend a fire, swamp a boat, spend the welfare and family allowance cheques on booze, leave their children unattended, steal or damage property. In an alcoholic daze, people can and often do behave in an irrational and irresponsible manner.

Children, almost totally dependent on their parents, are particularly susceptible to the harmful social consequences of drug abuse. In the harsher climate and living conditions of the north, this is especially so:

"A nine-day-old child is brought to the nursing station dead — cause of death listed as 'neglect'; a toddler falls out of bed and freezes to death while his parents sit in the bar; a ten-year-old hobbles along on crippled legs due to chronic gasoline sniffing; a 15-year-old boy comes close to death by freezing when left drunk outside a cabin after a fight; A 16-year-old girl is beaten to death by her drunk boyfriend."

(Family and Children's Services of the District of Kenora, Osnaburgh, p. 1937)

Not all alcohol abuse leads to physical harm or death. However, the mental and social effects on families, and children in particular, are severe. Children may have to be taken to a safer place away from the harm that alcoholic parents might inflict upon them.

Removal from home to an alien place, with strange people with different customs and an unknown language, can be traumatic. For a child to whom parents, are no matter how neglectful or abusive, are still mother and father, such a dislocation can leave scars that last a lifetime.

Enforced removal of a child from his home occurs in all communities but the extent is much greater in the north:

"In New Osnaburgh this year we have to care for ten per cent of all the children living here. In all but four of these 33 cases, the abuse of alcohol was directly related to the need to remove the child from his home."

(Family and Children's Services of the District of Kenora, Osnaburgh, p. 1937)

Violent deaths are a disturbing concomitant of alcohol abuse. Dr. Gary Goldthorpe told the Commission in Sioux Lookout:

"Over a third of the deaths in Sioux Lookout Zone each year are violent. By violent I mean largely accidental. For a six-year period there were 164 deaths of treaty Indian people by violence. The commonest single cause was drowning, with 49 deaths by drowning in a six-year period. The next commonest was burns, namely house fires, 25 deaths. The next commonest was exposure, that is freezing to death, 24 deaths. The next commonest was motor vehicle accidents, 13 deaths. And the next to that at 13 was homicide. There were ten suicides, eight accidental deaths by train (being hit by a train), firearms (accidental, four deaths), and falls were four, adding up to 164. Most of those deaths have been alcohol related or alcohol associated . . . Every accidental death I do an investigation to see if drinking was involved, and it is the case in well over half."

(Sioux Lookout Zone Hospital, Sioux Lookout, p. 264)

These statistics are strikingly higher than provincial averages:

"Approximately 25% of the deaths in the Kenora District are accidental or violent in nature, compared to about 9% in other parts of Ontario. Moreover, the majority of these deaths occur amongst those under 35 years of age — and most of these before they reach the age of 20 . . . Many, if not most, of these deaths involved the use of alcohol."

(Addiction Research Foundation, Kenora, p. 2928)

Some people, both native and non-native, perceived alcohol abuse as a consequence of cultural disintegration. Chief Andrew Rickard said:

"Our traditions, stifled within this foreign system could no longer guide us or support us, and we gradually sank into a pool of despair: a despair that led to alcoholism, violence and the numbing apathy that characterizes a colonized and dependent people."

(Treaty # 9, Sioux Lookout, p. 80)

Sister Simone Lefebvre, a missionary working with the people of Whitedog and Grassy Narrows, concurred in this view of alcohol as "effect" rather than "cause", a "symptom" of the damage that has been done to the native culture:

"Alcohol and drugs are not, in my opinion, the number one problems; these are but crutches. Their problems are much more deep-seated. Many have lost hope, have lost the meaning of their God-given lives. Just this week at Whitedog, we returned to our Creator and to Mother Earth, a beautiful young girl of 18 and, again, at Grassy Narrows another child of 14 is awaiting burial. Is this not enough to make us sit up and think and act? Our Ojibway brothers and sisters belong to a proud race. They are loving, generous, independent and they do not want hand-outs. They are concerned about their future and that of their children and they are looking to us for help in finding just solutions to their problems."

(Sister Simone Lefebvre, Whitedog, p. 2815)

The proximity of Indian communities to white settlements seems to have increased cultural disintegration and the consumption of alcohol. Isolation from white society seems to protect a native community from social and family breakdown:

"Since the new . . . road into the reserve . . . more white people have come bringing alcohol to our people. Our people hardly ever drank before. Our homes were happy and our families worked and played together. Now, with the white man's alcohol, we find beer and wine bottles all along the side of the road and in our yards."

(Mattagami Reserve Junior Band Council, Timmins, p. 1104)

Such experiences raise concerns about the expansion of development into previously isolated areas, particularly by the people in those communities which will be affected:

"When we look at the developed areas below the 50th parallel, we can see the problems the natives are having with alcohol. So what will happen if Reed Paper

project or Polar Gas pipeline or Hydro dams come into our area? We know that there will be jobs for the white people, who will in turn bring their liquor with them. They will no doubt give the natives a shot. Their shot will in turn cause family problems, beatings, and mischief, and the community as a whole will suffer. The uniqueness of alcohol is that if one uses it, everybody suffers directly or indirectly."

(Sandy Lake Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Sandy Lake, p. 2468)

The Lake of the Woods Pow-Wow Club, in detailing the despair of their people in the Kenora area, spoke about their brothers in the north in the Treaty # 9 area who still have enough control over their lives and communities to ban the bringing in of alcohol to their communities:

"What will happen to our brothers if this so-called 'development' takes place up there and others make decisions for them? We know what will happen. Liquor will flow and there will be no way of stopping it. Can it in truth be called 'development' when the conditions of life are worsened rather than bettered for the majority of those who live in the area immediately surrounding?"

(Lake of the Woods Pow-Wow Club, Kenora, p. 2537)

Another problem of drug addiction is that of gasoline and glue sniffing by young people.

"The parents turn their earnings into liquor. The children sniff glue and gas, following their parents' example."

(Pikangikum Band, Sandy Lake, p. 2450)

"Out of boredom and in their desperation, children are resorting to the pastime of gasoline sniffing in epidemic proportions. There are documented cases of crippings and even deaths due to this activity. Gasoline sniffing is just what glue sniffing used to be in the Toronto area."

(Family and Children's Services of the District of Kenora, Osnaburgh, p. 1938)

Several recommendations were made as to how to deal with such problems. The most forceful was prohibition. A native liaison worker at Pickle Lake said:

"Osnaburgh, year after year, has been forcibly placed on the interdicted list by their chief, who is anxious to protect them from the abuses which have resulted from excessive drinking."

(Henry Munro, Pickle Lake, p. 1756)

A woman elder from Osnaburgh had the same answer when she said:

"One of the strongest recommendations which must not be overlooked by the Commission, is that the banning of all forms of alcohol be done throughout the area and it would include all native people . . . I would say for those people who are members of the Osnaburgh Band, I would imagine that I have angered them by suggesting that all alcohol be banned to all native people, because I realize that a lot of them drink."

(Maria Kwandibens, Osnaburgh, p. 1946)

A high school principal in Geraldton recommended:

"Any industrial development north of 50 should be accompanied by a government strategy that enables personal and social growth and development hinged on alternatives and activities not contingent with alcohol use."

(A. Korkola, Geraldton, p. 1270)

ARF officers pointed out that increased consumption of alcohol generally leads to increased abuse, and the main thrust for control of the problem seems to be an effort to decrease consumption. They suggested:

"developing a pricing policy which would keep the price of alcohol at a fixed level in relation to income, controlling the number of liquor and beer outlets, enforcing the laws relating to sale to minors and intoxicated persons and sale by bootleggers, intensive education programs, research teams to monitor areas where development is contemplated, and involvement of local communities as to sale, educational programs and care for problem drinkers."

(Addiction Research Foundation, Kenora, p. 2925)

The Sandy Lake Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse set, as its goals, community education regarding the results of alcohol and drug abuse, alternative solutions, and development of local rehabilitative efforts to regain and maintain pride and dignity as people. It plans to meet these goals through school, community and family educational sessions, seeking out local leadership, providing local counsellors to those individuals or families experiencing problems with gasoline sniffing, and developing a local rehabilitation centre to be staffed by trained workers:

"What I am saying, Mr. Commissioner, is that we don't want anybody to die here because of alcohol. We have been lucky this far, and we have not had a fatal accident in direct relationship to alcohol. We are going to need all the help we can get in order to keep it that way."

((Sandy Lake Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Sandy Lake, p. 2468)

These problems and recommendations were put forward to deal with the overwhelming social problems connected with alcohol and the underlying despair:

"I feel it is the occurrence of these sudden deaths or related injuries which perpetuate the cycle of welfare, depression, family breakdown, child neglect and alcohol problems which beset so many area residents . . . The loss of a close family member, provider, friend or neighbour goes beyond the personal remorse that death and injury always brings to us. When sudden death becomes as frequent as it is here, I think it has a great deal of effect on peoples' minds. A fatalistic outlook — and a degree of hopelessness — seem at times to overcome the efforts of those who attempt to confront community problems. If we are to cope with the future, the most essential element we need to preserve is our hope."

(Addiction Research Foundation, Kenora, p. 2929)



Women in the North Seek Justice

At almost every one of its hearings, the Royal Commission on the Northern Environment heard from women how, in the past, they had been excluded from development discussions and planning and yet had to bear the full after-effects of resource exhaustion and social breakdown. Women spoke up for themselves, for more jobs and training opportunities, for daycare, for supportive health and social services, and for a role in the planning of any future developments in the north. Their basic concerns were similar to those of women in other parts of the country who seek equal rights for women. Only their experiences in a more limited occupational and social milieu revealed the greater hardships and barriers to equality of opportunity for women in the north.

Recognition of Women in North Overdue

What the Commission learned from women in the north was certainly opposite to the romantic image created in popular fiction. Many southern artists in the past have pictured the native woman with a tumpline on her forehead, carrying a pack or tikinagan with child or leading a portage through the bush country. In this same type of romantic reportage the pioneer white woman has been pictured as a helpmate, working side by side with her man, building the log cabin, growing, gathering and preserving the fruits and vegetables of the earth.

In fact, the Commission learned that traditionally, it would be left to native women to break camp, move family and belongings and set up another home, following the seasonal pursuits of hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering. Trapping, has often been a male-female team effort among native people, with women helping to set traps and retrieve the catch, and invariably scraping the furs, and tanning the hides. Today in the north, trapping, commercial fishing and wild rice harvesting are usually partnership efforts for men and women.

At the turn of the century, white women came to live in the north in some numbers during the second phase of "civilizing" the country, the period after the wilderness had been mapped. Traders' wives, missionaries, teachers — they all contributed to life in the north. Later came the miners' wives, the bull cooks working in lumber camps and the women of easy virtue in mining boom towns. For women, the north meant adapting themselves to a rough and narrow lifestyle created and dominated by men. It was not a comfortable life nor a familiar one.

When non-native women first arrived in the north, they found no equivalents to the community social and cultural organizations they had known in the areas from which they came. Institutions similar to those to which these women were accustomed all had to be established: churches, schools, activity clubs. The

Commission was told that it was women, in the main, who founded the present-day socio-cultural structures in the north and promoted the feeling of a regional identity and pride in the towns of northern Ontario.

While there was some contact between native and white women over the years, close friendships were unusual. The segregations of the past stemmed from differences of language, culture, status and race. This division still exists to a considerable extent today in northern towns; i.e., white people live in town, native people mainly in shanties on the outskirts or on reserves; shared use of the towns is only for shopping, medical services and commercial entertainment.

In recent years, some younger women of both cultures have been learning to recognize feelings and life experiences they share in common, goals which can bring them together as women. In this spirit, they are reportedly talking with each other more openly, in friendly, neighbourly ways and joining in alliances to improve their status.

Representatives of these women appeared before the Royal Commission and centred their views on one point above all: women wish to be included in all social, cultural and economic decisions to be made for the future of their communities.



Northern Women See Themselves Particularly Disadvantaged

Issues raised by women in the north were basically similar to those voiced by their sisters in the south. They need facilities for pre-school children to allow mothers freedom to seek employment or pursue cultural interests. They want interval houses to allow them protection from beatings and abuse. They want job opportunities to give them greater economic independence and to allow them a greater say in the development of the area.

The problems northern women share with their southern sisters are compounded by the realities of living in a remote northern community. Isolation, inadequate housing, lack of cultural and recreational facilities and a shortage of activities and occupations outside the home all serve to make life harder for a woman in the north:

"Fear, isolation, lack of financial resources, transportation, lack of child care, are all factors that make living in the north a very difficult place for women to grow and participate as citizens of Ontario."

(Northwestern Ontario International Women's Decade Co-ordinating Council, Nakina, p. 1556)

An almost total absence of paid employment opportunities for women characterized a number of communities visited by the Commission. One reason for this lack, the Commission was told, was the dependence, typical in the north, of an entire community on a single employer, generally a resource extraction industry:

"In single industry communities . . . the majority of jobs will be male oriented and the traditional female employment opportunities will not be as prevalent as in a more diversified southern community."

(Timmins Women's Resource Centre, Timmins, p. 2350)

There is a:

"Lack of employment opportunities, not only in the one and only primary work force associated with resource development, but also lack of employment opportunities in support services necessary to the community. The few jobs available for women are in the low paid clerical, sales, or service-oriented work, usually on a part-time basis with denial of employee benefits. Jobs men will not do! Women often seek these jobs out of both social and economic desperation. The notable lack of equal employment opportunity programs and equitable hiring practices discriminate against women in single industry resource communities."

(Northwestern Ontario International Women's Decade Co-ordinating Council, Nakina, p. 1552)

In part, because there are few jobs for women, daycare services and facilities are inadequate and costly; and without daycare facilities, the few jobs available for women are further out of reach:

"This is a particularly distressful situation for women

who are heads of families. Costs of daycare, when and if they are available, are not affordable by women who are single parents."

(Northwestern Ontario International Women's Decade Co-ordinating Council, Nakina, p. 1553)

With few opportunities for employment outside the home, a northern woman is restricted to her home and family. Concern was expressed about:

"... the alarming increase of mental illness of young women attributed to the never-ending stress associated with the caring for small children in cramped company housing, trailers, or mobile homes."

(Northwestern Ontario International Women's Decade Co-ordinating Council, Nakina, p. 1552)

Not only women experience the psychological strain of isolated northern communities. Men too suffer the tension in an unstable way of life. Tragically, the victims of their frustrations are often their wives and children:

"The isolation, frustrations and other problems related to day to day living in single industry towns appears to increase the frequency of wife and child abuse. The top priority expressed by women in the communities we visited was the desperate need for crisis or interval housing. Small communities lack even minimal social support services. It is not uncommon for the physically abused women with children to wander about the streets on cold winter nights looking for a place to sleep. A crisis home would provide much needed shelter to administer to the physical, emotional, and the material needs of women in temporary crisis situations."

(Northwestern Ontario International Women's Decade Co-ordinating Council, Nakina, p. 1553)

The stresses of women living in isolation are compounded for those who come to the north later in life, perhaps following a husband who has found employment:

"Those of us born here are accustomed to the conditions. We value our environment, our independence, self-reliance and pace of life while recognizing mutual dependency in times of emergency. To newcomers, the harsh and brutal weather conditions can be debilitating; inadequate housing or crowded trailer parks demoralizing; the absence of medical services close at hand frightening; and recreational and educational facilities, virtually non-existent for women, depressing. Soon cabin fever, confusion about the so-called frontier mentality, isolation and loneliness replace the romantic expectations of 'living up north'. Those of us born here have never really questioned the vast distances which separate us from not only services, entertainment, etc., but also from each other."

(Kenora Women's Coalition, Kenora, p. 2710)

Many were concerned that expansion and new developments would cause further problems. An influx of workers, both single and married, imposes a burden on a community which may not be able to support it. Once again, those who suffer most tend to be women and children:

"The social impact of (development) will affect all members of the community, but it may have a particular effect on women, their children, their homes and their community. Aggravated housing problems, the pressures of over-crowding and the deterioration in the supply of public utilities such as electricity and water, and in communications, would fall mainly on women who, during the long northern winters are often alone at home."

(Kenora-Rainy River District Health Council, Kenora, p. 2943)

Native women, in particular, feel the negative impacts of development. Sometimes, an isolated native community is forced to absorb an influx of people without any preparation or assistance:

"Native people placed in this new situation must make enormous attempts to adjust and accommodate the new arrivals . . . This new transplant upon this community will, and has, confused the values and way of life of native people . . . By uprooting the basic fabric of a community, the consequences resulting from it causes social deterioration . . . The incidence of alcoholism among native women is becoming increasingly high. Social structure within a family and community is not stable."

(Ontario Native Women's Association, Geraldton, p. 1320)

The Commission was reminded that development, with its influx of transient workers, creates other problems for native women:

"We are concerned about the sexual exploitation of our native women, through the availability of alcohol and our communities being close to the camps: the evidence of violent attacks on women, rape, illegitimate pregnancies, unwanted children, prostitution and venereal diseases will rise beyond a social problem."

(Ontario Native Women's Association, Geraldton, p. 1323)

Generally, the women of the north, both native and non-native, recognized that industrial activities of some sort are inevitable. Consequently, they were determined that future undertakings not bring with them problems comparable to those experienced in past developments:

"Traditionally, economic development in northern single industry and resource based communities has not included the experience, knowledge, concerns and interests of women. This has resulted in male-oriented communities at all levels, economically, socially, and politically. The needs of women and children have been given only marginal recognition."

(Kenora Women's Coalition, Kenora, p. 2710)

From their submissions to the Royal Commission, it was clear that northern women want the opportunity to be involved in decision-making, to help determine the future of the communities in which they live and to secure equal rights for their sex:

"... women . . . have not only the right but the obligation to be represented in all aspects of the economic and social development of the north. Looking at development from a woman's perspective is essential, for it is the women who live in these communities who are most affected by the developmental decisions which are made by men."

(Northwestern Ontario International Women's Decade Co-ordinating Council, Nakina, p. 1554)



Discrimination and Inequality of Opportunity

The Ontario Human Rights Commission, labour unions and churches added their voices to those of native people in demanding an end to discriminatory hiring practices and to insensitive educational and training barriers which prevent native people from enjoying the opportunities available to other Ontarians. Various representatives called for recognition, each on its own merit and strength, of both native and non-native cultures in northern Ontario. All urged co-operation in helping overcome the unresolved hostility which has already erupted into violence in past encounters.

Prejudice — A Black Eye in the North

The suffering of native people from racial discrimination was outlined in considerable detail before the Royal Commission. Acts of prejudice, given as examples, ranged from documented physical abuse to social insensitivity to people's feelings, from housing neglect to job lack, from indifferent service in hotels and stores to negative or no response from government offices.

Part of the problem, the Commission was told, lies in the fragile nature of the northern economy which supports only a narrow spectrum of jobs, nearly all reliant on outside resource demand and most heavily dependent on transient labour. This environment also determines that development be based on the large-scale extraction of natural resources which often precludes alternate uses of the land.

In determining land uses, trade-offs must be made. In the past, those who initially lost out in economic terms have been the native people living off the land.

In time, often in less than 30 years from the start of a development project, non-native as well as native workers have found themselves disadvantaged. This occurrence is predictable at the point of exhaustion of an industry's resource base. Seriously affected are those workers and their families who have invested their working lives in building a community whose economic future is necessarily limited. Their dream of a gainful future evaporates.

Tension resulting from a collapsed economy can lead directly to the stir and spread of racism. The concept of "work" in Canadian society owes its definition to non-natives. It means trading labour for wages. By contrast, the Indian's way of survival (living off the land according to the seasons) is generally not viewed as "gainful" except by those few non-Indian northerners who also live this way, such as white commercial fishermen and trappers.

Addressing the Commission, native spokesmen maintained that non-Indian people, particularly those who live in communities some distance away and apart from reserve life, generally do not hold Indian people in high regard. White people, they claim, do not see Indians engaged in their native enterprises.

Instead, the Commission was told, townspeople in the north tend to judge all Indians by the few derelicts they encounter on their urban street corners, individuals who are lost, homeless, drunk and destitute.

Indian people who become rootless, say their representatives, are casualties, victims of dislocation from traditional homelands and livelihoods. They are tragic products of exposure to white society's religious and commercial approaches, an historic process which eradicated both traditional beliefs and a cultural sense of self-worth and left little of meaning in its place. On northern streets, the sight of these disabled natives blinds many non-native people from seeing the many other Indians privately going about their business in town, working or shopping, seeing a doctor or pharmacist before returning to the reserve.

Many northerners, native and non-native, are today actively involved in combatting racism and in trying to replace negative attitudes with acts of cooperation and peaceful coexistence. These "positivists" praised activities such as the annual Lake of the Woods Pow-Wow. Here non-Indian people are invited to join the celebration of Ojibway singing, dancing and drumming. On other occasions, both groups may participate in cross-cultural seminars. Low key social occasions, such as bingos, they pointed out, bring people together. Outlying reserves often hold open sporting events, such as baseball field days or tours of their reserve facilities, to give townspeople an idea of what life on the reserve is like. Women of both cultures have formed joint associations and attend conferences to try to identify social and cultural issues upon which they can work together.

More recently, some school boards in northern Ontario have begun offering courses in Indian culture, history and language to both Indian and non-Indian students, while community colleges provide such courses for adults in the larger centres. All these activities were cited as positive developments in extending a hand in friendship and in breaking down the barriers of racial prejudice.



People Outside the Cultural Mainstream

The question of discrimination against Indians in northern Ontario, in the view of observers, is mainly one of Euro-Canadian self-preoccupation and thoughtlessness regarding the plight of a group of people outside the cultural mainstream. The Ontario Human Rights Commission stated in Kenora that its largest single complaint category was one dealing with native people. Charges range from denial of public services and utilities to denial of the right to a room in a hotel, refusal of a meal in a restaurant or a beer in a bar. They went on to say:

"The discrimination is inherent within the system . . . directed against racial and ethnic groups . . . There has been a long-standing observable pattern of unequal access to education, social and employment opportunities that has worked against minorities and women, but, which in turn, has favoured their male counterparts . . . the native applicant cannot seek protection from the formal provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code. These sections of the code cannot address structural discrimination and inequality of opportunity."

(Ontario Human Rights Commission, Kenora, p. 2551)

Many non-native persons practice a discrimination of indifference and unwillingness to press for equal justice for the discriminated-against group. For example, a resident of Sioux Lookout described an establishment response:

"Hydro dams flooded areas sacred to our native people, graveyards destroyed and desecrated for example, not too far from where this meeting is being held, and the bones of their ancestors scattered on the new beaches formed by the flooding, and nothing mentioned by those responsible for this wanton act of destruction and humiliation. Had this been perpetrated on non-native people there would have been a province-wide outcry but the native people of whom I am speaking suffered in silence and without recourse."

(Wesley Houston, Sioux Lookout, p. 228)

The position of second-class citizen or even no-class citizen is an uncomfortable one, but one that many native Canadians feel they have been placed in by an uncaring society. As Chief Saul Fiddler said at Sandy Lake:

"When one is told long enough and often enough by a dominant culture that his own culture is pagan, primitive and inferior, he begins to believe it."

(Chief Saul Fiddler, Sandy Lake, p. 2415)

Native and non-native representatives agreed that most racial discrimination in the north is unconsciously practiced. There is little in it that arises from deliberate hostility, anger or fear. Yet overt discrimination does exist.

In Kenora the Commission was shown a photograph album and listened to the descriptions of the pictures:

"A 47-year old man beaten up by four white teenage boys, 15 to 20 years old. That's one."

A 67-year old man. Four teenage boys, all white, approached this man, asked him if he had any money. He told them he had none. The boys got mad so they beat him up. Mark around his throat where one of them attempted to strangle him. He says he's sore all over where he was punched and kicked. Incident was reported to police and also a signed statement is available. That's number two.

No. 3. 46-year old man. This man was walking around the street in the early hours of the morning as he had no place to go. He met three white teenage boys. As he approached them two boys got on each side of him, while the other one grabbed him, threw him on the sidewalk. As soon as he fell down then the three proceeded to beat him up. He tried to protect his face by putting his arms up but one of them managed to kick him above the left eye.

No. 4. 27-years old. This man was sober, when he decided to go for a walk along the beach road area in Keewatin. He saw four white boys coming towards him. As they approached him he realized they were going to pick a fight with him so he started to run but the boys caught up with him and they beat and kicked him. He said there was no reason for them to attack him.

No. 5. 45-years old, beaten up by three white boys. Location: Recreation Centre. Approximate age of boys: 16- to 18-years old. Signed statement is available. And here I put a common sight on the streets of Kenora; there's blood, you know, on the streets.

No. 6. An old age pensioner. An old lady. Four white boys approached this lady and asked her if she received her pension cheque yet, and when she didn't answer they started beating her up.

No. 7. This man was walking towards the hospital, which is located on the west side of Kenora, when he felt that he was being followed. When he was sure that some people were close behind him he started to walk faster and eventually broke into a run. When he looked back the people were also running so he decided to run into the bush across the railroad tracks. He thought someone grabbed him and that's the last he remembers. When he woke up he was in the hospital and his legs felt funny. His legs were; this man will never walk again because his legs were cut off.

No. 8. A man and a woman were walking to town when they became aware that they were being followed by three white boys. One of the boys was holding a bottle while the other one was carrying a chain. The man said he didn't notice if the other boy had anything. Sensing that the boys were after him the man told the lady to go ahead and try and get away. Thinking that she was safe enough, he started running. He apparently didn't go very far. Next thing he knew someone was trying to wake him up. When he was fully awake he resumed walking. When he was asked why he didn't report this to the police he answered, 'They wouldn't believe me anyway, besides I would be the one to be thrown in jail'.

No. 9. A man decided to go for coffee. As he neared his destination four boys approached him. He recognized three of them so he stopped to talk to them. Instead of talking, they started beating him up, robbed him of money and left him. He reported this to the police, made a statement saying that he knew who beat him up. No results came of that."

(Nancy Morrison, Kenora, p. 2596)

Non-natives attending the hearings were quick to express their dismay at these acts and to disassociate themselves from any support of the perpetrators:

"The very moving address given by Nancy Morrison on Tuesday is a problem that we all face on these streets, and I submit to you I know no citizen in Kenora other than some of the young youth who, you know, partake in that type of thing. I would point out to you, Sir, that it is virtually impossible to get insurance on plate glass windows on Main Street and Second Street in this town because of those same type of things, but it is certainly not supported by our people."

(Kenora and District Chamber of Commerce, Kenora, p. 3056)

The effects of racism and discrimination in the north are deeply felt:

"I am an Indian, and I am young, and I said I am good. When I say I am good, I don't mean a person too good for anyone, but a person who feels confident she's done well and deserves that classification. But I am tired. I am tired of being put down. I am tired for not being recognized as a good person. I am tired of asking and tired of being refused. I am tired of being misused. I am tired of being treated like I'm dumb. I am so tired that I can no longer withhold my voice and allow the world to tire me into losing my self-respect, because I am proud to be an Indian."

(Roberta Keesick, Kenora, p. 2680)

Some representatives of the Indian people said that ending racial prejudice had to begin with a recognition of the problem by all northerners:

"We want to propose a serious alternative to either passive resignation or cultural genocide, neither of which is acceptable to us, nor in the best interests of the Canadian people. What we are calling for is a recognition of the existing reality, that northern Ontario is a divided community with stark inequalities between the races."

(Treaty # 9, Moosonee, p. 3087)

Understanding and sharing of each culture's strengths would be next:

"Until the dominant society comes to appreciate the gifts that Indian society has to offer us, we will continue to treat the destruction of their lifestyle in this part of Ontario lightly, giving no thought to the treasure we are losing . . . I must add, however, that we too must share. We have given Indian people the vote and yet . . . I am appalled at how little attempt has been made to help them understand what it is all about. We put great effort into assisting newly arrived immigrants to understand our system and how it operates to facilitate their involvement, but very little effort — very little in helping our northern neighbours with the same thing."

(Rev. Stuart Harvey, Kenora, p. 2747)

Suggestions were made for reforms which would overcome the structural discrimination:

"A full two-thirds of the population of this area are native people and remedial measures are necessary if they are to achieve equal footing to overcome past disadvantages."

(Ontario Human Rights Commission, Kenora, p. 2554)

The Ontario Human Rights Commission offered to activate that part of their act which allows the agency to implement:

" . . . special employment programs to remedy the adverse affect of past discrimination in education, training and career development . . . to increase the employment of members of a group . . . currently under-represented or under-utilized in the labour force."

They made the comment that:

"It is pointless to proclaim that the rules of the foot-race must be equal for all, when some are already a hundred yards behind."

(Ontario Human Rights Commission, Kenora, p. 2557)

In addition to Ontario Human Rights initiatives, other special employment programs were recommended to improve native people's position in northern society. Campbell Red Lake Mines reported that it already operates one such program which allows native people to work on a seasonal basis:

"... in effect a two-seasonal flow, both summer and winter, which depends on the hunting, trapping and fishing seasons ... The workers are trained and experienced, and thus can be accommodated into the work force on this seasonal basis."

(Campbell Red Lake Mines, Red Lake, p. 608)

Employers were called on to take affirmative action in implementing such measures as:

"... special transportation to combat adverse weather conditions and long distances from home to the job, actively recruiting native people through their own media and with the help of their own organizations, special training courses ... flexible or special working hours, long-term career planning, and job sharing."

(Ontario Human Rights Commission, Kenora, p. 2555)

Northerners of both cultures saw the need to act to ensure equality:

"Where there is injustice, let it be corrected by courts. Where there is unequal opportunity to obtain an education or commercially viable skill, let us provide the programs and the means whereby our people take advantage of them. Where there are political rights which are not fully enjoyed by native people, let us provide them and ensure that they are freely and equally available. Where further investments of social capital can be shown to be of assistance to our native people let us provide it willingly ..."

(Kenora and District Chamber of Commerce, Kenora, p. 3068)





Out-migration Imperils Northern Future

Movement of population between centres in the north and out of the north affects both native and non-native cultures. Young people of both groups often find it necessary to leave their homes, first in search of education and then of employment. For the non-native, such a move is emotionally disruptive, a departure from familiar places and people. For native youth it means a drastic adjustment to a whole new way of life. They experience a culture clash within their own country.

Can the North Afford Population Depletion?

The economy of northern Ontario is based on the exporting of raw materials and the importing of finished products. This is true also in the matter of human resources. With few exceptions, young people gain education and job experience elsewhere. The return half of the cycle, however, is obstructed when opportunities do not exist for northern people to come back to the north with their knowledge and skills. Northerners are rightfully distressed by the "brain drain" which takes away their best and brightest, with little prospect of calling them home again.

The Commission was advised that many northerners want to stay put but cannot. They try to establish permanent roots in northern Ontario but then a dwindling resource or a downturn in economic conditions obliges them to move to the next big development site. Northerners called for a more diversified and stable economy that would reduce the need for them to move on and for their children to leave.

For native people, there were many reasons for leaving home. Children who wish to continue their education past grade eight or ten must attend high school off the reserve, many times hundreds of miles away from home — and light years away from the culture in which they have been raised. Other children are forced to leave because their parents have succumbed to the ravages of alcohol and despair and cannot care for them.

Sometimes entire families are forced to relocate off the reserve because they can no longer make a living off the land, and this for a variety of reasons, ranging from pollution or government regulations ending their way of life, to not having learned the skills required for survival in the first place.

For other northerners, the pursuit of education and jobs is also the main reason for leaving home. Students who wish to continue to post-secondary education or training must travel to Thunder Bay, Sudbury, or further. Small towns north of 50 do not have the facilities or the resources to prepare these students for the wider world.

A recent Ontario Department of Labour and federal Employment and Immigration Canada study noted:

"The real reason for most migrants to leave emerged quite clearly from this study: the majority of people who move from northwestern Ontario see little opportunity for advancement there and hope to find better opportunities and higher pay elsewhere. That they succeed in doing so is demonstrated by the vast improvement in the income range of those leaving the region. It seems, then, that northwestern Ontario serves as a way-station for upwardly-mobile workers who enter the region seeking better job opportunities, and who eventually leave for the same reason. Thus, while improvement in educational, recreational, and housing facilities may be of some help in reducing the tendency to leave, only by providing job opportunities commensurate with the abilities, education, and expectations of this upwardly-mobile group can the trend toward migration from the region be significantly altered."

Leaving Home, Often for Worse

The Royal Commission heard great concern expressed about the number of people leaving the north — for education, for jobs and for opportunities unavailable in their home regions. In all the towns of the north, the people, young and old, questioned why there should be such limited opportunities for work, study and play.

In the words of young northerners:

"I want to remain here, I want to grow and develop here, and there is probably nothing else at this time that means as much to me as fighting for the opportunity to do so. Many of my friends have gone to other parts of Canada; to Toronto, Montreal, London, Vancouver and most often to Winnipeg for their education. They grow there and they learn there and all too often they remain there."

(Fergie Devins, Kenora, p. 2573)

And:

"... the people who do return come back only to find that jobs they are trained for simply are not available."

(Cathy Love, Sioux Lookout, p. 332)

Many people felt that the root of the problem lay in the pattern of development which had occurred in the past, where very little of the wealth extracted from the north is cycled back to its origin:

"Where are the jobs from the silver of Cobalt, Gowganda, Elk Lake, etc.? In the south. Where else? Along with the cream of our young people. Kirkland Lake, Timmins and their resource, gold, same story — the workers built and paid for the towns, educated the children who had to go south because no jobs were provided for their skill."

(Arnold Peters, MP, Moosonee, p. 3115)

People pointed out that development of the boom and bust pattern can only drain the north of its resources — including its most precious one, its youth:

"The young go south, not from any desire on their part to leave their home, their family and communities but to find employment — to use their talents and their education and to raise their families."

(Arnold Peters, MP, Moosonee, p. 3116)

As long as industry considers it more favourable to extract and move on, there will be no legacy for the north, and nothing on which to build a future, northerners pointed out. People of the north called for local

involvement in planning development. Training and future opportunities could be built into development plans instead of hiring outside skilled labour, extracting the resources, and leaving little behind:

"Guidelines should provide for some processing at the source location rather than in the United States or in already over-crowded southern Ontario. The diversity of job positions would enable the area to retain some of our youth who are presently departing to find employment, and not because they want to leave the area."

(Madsen Community Association, Red Lake, p. 539)

The Indian people, the Commission learned, are traditionally a migratory people. Development of the north has greatly affected their normal pattern:

"The survival of the native peoples in this country is the result of their ability to adapt to their environment. They are not static. When the land no longer supports their lifestyle, they move."

(Canadian Association in Support of The Native Peoples, Toronto, p. 2035)

In recent years the dispersal of native people has been increasing. Many have headed for the towns and cities of both the north and south. While some went in search of job opportunities, others drifted into larger communities and remained there under the chronic alcoholism that engulfed them. Much out-migration occurs within the north as native people are forced out of their own world and into another:

"Most of our people who went out were caught in the middle of the conflict between two cultures. They reacted in one of several ways. Some retreated to the security of the conservative Indian world. Some sought geographical refuge. Others escaped into the twilight zone of alcoholism. Some rebelled and committed crimes or engaged in anti-social behaviour."

(Big Trout Lake Band, Osnaburgh, p. 1873)

In the towns, native people were exposed to all forms of discrimination. They lived in the shanty districts where there was no water or sewage, no garbage disposal, no electricity, only:

"... improvised shacks just large enough to contain a bed and an air-tight stove."

(Big Trout Lake Band, Osnaburgh, p. 1873)

One such area is McDougalville in Red Lake:

"There is one large concentration of natives in the McDougalville area of Red Lake. However, most natives do not live in one district neighbourhood. There does not appear to be any explicit or implicit policy or practice of racial discrimination. The existence of McDougalville is related to problems of housing, job opportunities, vocational training and social problems. For many, McDougalville serves as an area of transition."

(Tri-Municipal Committee, Red Lake, p. 471)

The problems of substandard housing continue and are worsened by the overcrowding which takes place when more native people migrate in to the towns and stay with relatives who are just learning to cope with urban realities such as rent, landlords, liquor and police. Among the few agencies established to assist native migrants are the Native Friendship Centres in 16 towns throughout the province (72 in Canada).

A leader of the Toronto Native Friendship Centre told the Commission that:

"The increase in the workload for native centres across Ontario has increased to such a degree in the last ten years that I fear for the next ten years. They cannot handle the numbers of people who are coming into the urban areas with the resources they have, and we want to see a reverse of that trend, so the people when they come to the cities come because they want to and not because they are forced to."

(Roger Obonsawin, Toronto, p. 2032)

The Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association stressed the need for adult education programs to help make the transition to city life easier:

"Where are the meaningful adult education programs in Thunder Bay, Toronto, Winnipeg? Overseas immigrants coming to Toronto are introduced to a variety of courses to help them adjust and establish themselves in the society and economy of Ontario. Should a person coming from Pikangikum, coming to Red Lake, apply from outside the country to learn English and basic town life skills?"

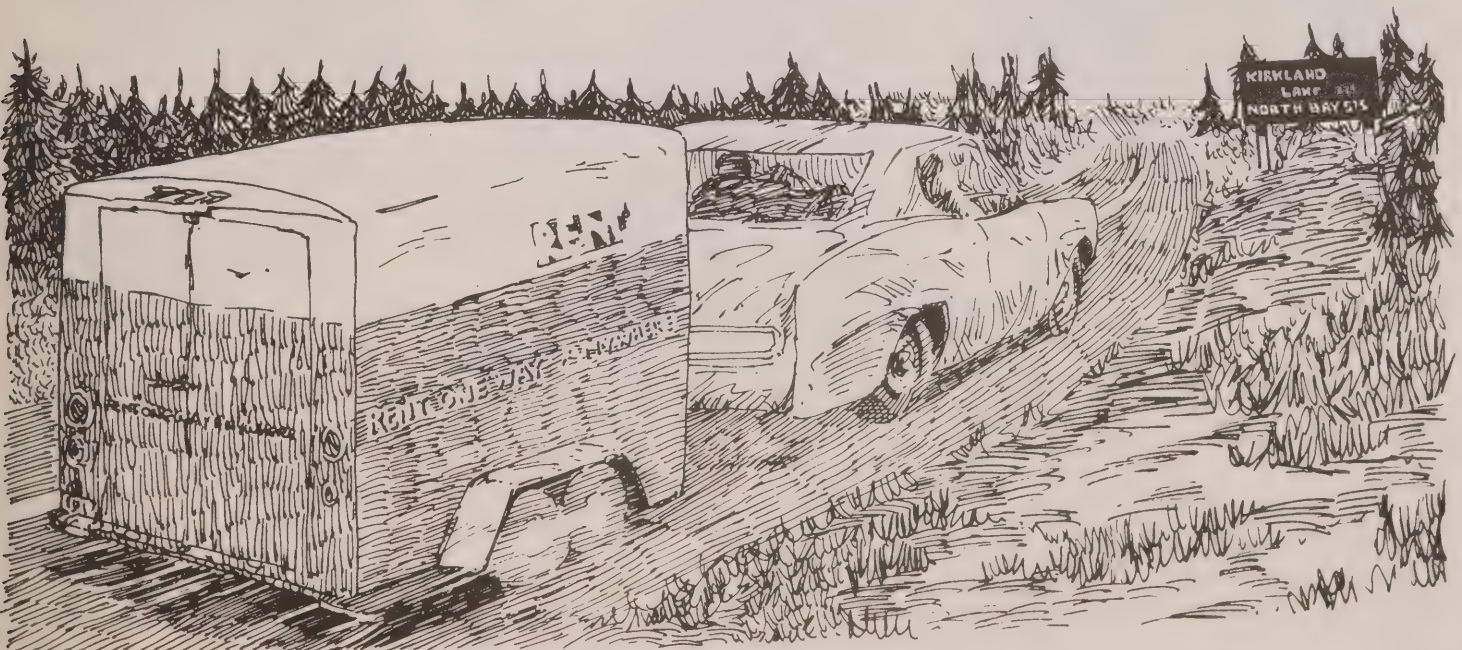
(Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association, Kenora, p. 2639)

Forced into towns and cities against their disposition, native students must leave their homes to attend high school and young non-native northerners go south to college or in search of jobs. All of this is a sad situation, but the most heart-rending out-migration is that of native foster children who are apprehended by the Children's Aid and placed in white foster homes. A social worker for the Children's Aid Society told the Commission that:

"The life of a foster child from a native home is not always good. As well as leaving his parents, he must often leave his brothers and sisters, his school, his community, his language and his culture . . . We have children who have experienced as many as 12 foster homes in the first four years of life . . . When a native child is placed in a white environment the trauma he experiences is beyond our understanding."

(Joyce Timpson, Osnaburgh, p. 1937)

The dislocation of people, both native and non-native, from the homes which they have loved is one of the social costs of changing the northern environment. Little wonder, the Commission was told, that talk of large-scale development arouses instant apprehension among northerners about being uprooted and forced to move again.





Employment—A Factor in Northern Identity

Job creation in northern Ontario relies heavily on natural resource industries — mining, forestry and tourism. Thus employment opportunities are subject to the economic uncertainties which exist for these industries in the north. A variety of work-related topics came to light during the Royal Commission's hearings: i.e., lack of secondary industry, limited number and type of jobs in the extractive industries, job discrimination against women and native people in hiring and training, lack of educational and training opportunities related to employment generally in northern communities. Also raised was the philosophical question of whether the native way of working the land through trapping, hunting and fishing was not in itself more meaningful work than hourly wage labour.

Jobs for Some—Unemployment for Others

Many Canadians have a less than realistic impression of work in the north. Pictures of boisterous lumberjacks, hard-living miners, carefree truckdrivers — sturdily built men, arms like tree trunks, powerful as bears, come to mind.

However, the precariousness of employment in the north makes northerners less than boisterous, more concerned than carefree, about what they will do when the bust after the boom has come, when it is too soon to retire but retraining is difficult and when one is too attached to one's community to want to move on.

Unemployment in the north is hardest on low income workers — labourers and unskilled workmen. The professionals and managers are mobile and most can easily move elsewhere.

Those northerners who are self-employed in traditional pursuits and make their living off the land are not as affected by the economic forces that cause unemployment for wage earners.

As the Royal Commission on the Northern Environment learned, working for wages is a matter of importance to both non-native and native northerners. Natives feel that they gain stature among their families and peers by having a paying job. Resident northerners take pride in the jobs they hold.

Canadian census figures indicate that one in four employed people in the north works in the extraction of raw materials and resources from the land (forestry, fishing, trapping, mines and quarries. On a province-wide basis, however, only 1.6% of all the people in Ontario work in these primary industries. While 25% of all employed Ontarians work in the manufacturing sector, only 3% of northern Ontarians work in this field.¹

It might be expected that northerners would favour continued expansion of resource-based primary industry. However, time and again, submissions from towns and individuals told the Royal Commission that secondary industry was what was desired and should be encouraged. Northerners, the Commission was told, believe that their economy must become a great deal more diversified by way of manufacturing if a secure future for their population is to be ensured.

The people at work in wage-paying jobs reflect only a narrow range of the more basic occupations and services generally available in most southern communities.

Regrettably, occupational diversity is not nearly as great in the north as in the south. As a consequence, those with specific training who are unable to find jobs are forced either to leave northern Ontario or to await fresh economic development thrusts in the north. This phenomenon particularly affects young people just out of school or post-secondary training programs.

The Commission was provided with many causes for unemployment in northern Ontario. Among them, mercury pollution on the English-Wabigoon River system has deprived many commercial fishermen of their livelihood. Closing the last gold mine at Geraldton seven years ago has meant the end of an era for anyone staying there. The possible curtailment of CN service could lead to unemployment among railway workers in northern Ontario.

¹Statistics Canada, 1971 Census.

Potential Jobs For North Go South

Northerners expressed concern about the lack of stable employment opportunities, and about the limited range and slow growth of employment opportunities in the north. At the Commission's hearings, people criticized past developments when many potential jobs for the north were exported south along with unprocessed natural resources. That many well-paying, relatively permanent jobs in the north were filled by non-northerners, was a cause of irritation. Many northerners argued for development designed to bring stable jobs, but were adamant in their concern that the social and environmental irresponsibilities of the past not be repeated.

There were frequent references to the lack of employment opportunities in the north as a factor in prompting young northerners to go south in search of jobs:

"Time and again, we in the north have said that we want development, but we want controlled development. We are not looking to locate a large steel mill with all the attendant problems in our community. Our environment is extremely important to us. We are also well aware that we do not have the population to support a large manufacturing concern. The distance from the markets also prohibits such large undertakings. What we do protest is that the small, specialized type of industry that would fit well into our area is not here, so that our sons and daughters who we would like to remain here to live on our land, have no choice but to go elsewhere."

(Town of Geraldton, Geraldton, p. 1339)

While employment opportunities are limited for everyone in the north, native people claimed that they are faced with particularly acute unemployment. The situation in Sandy Lake is indicative of many native communities:

"In our community of 1100 people, there are 40 full-time jobs. There is some seasonal and short-term employment but right now, there are 300 people who would take jobs if there were any. Eighty per cent of the community is on welfare."

(Sandy Lake Band, Sandy Lake, p. 2410)

The statistics for Moose Factory were equally gloomy:

"Statistics of the Department of Manpower indicate that of a 300-man labour force in Moose Factory, one in every three, or 100 people are unemployed. Moreover, it is estimated by local officials that for the combined communities of Moose Factory-Moosonee, having a total population of approximately 3,000 and a labour force of 600, the unemployment rate is no less than 60% . . . Our people want to work but there is no work for them."

(James Bay Education Centre, Moosonee, p. 3128)

People recognized the relationship between acquiring job skills and employability. But some also pondered the futility of attempting to provide training when there were no jobs for them to go to:

"We are training people for jobs that are relatively or totally non-existent in this area . . . If we are going to train our people, we must allow them at least the opportunity to practise their skills."

(James Bay Education Centre, Moosonee, p. 3160)

The sense of frustration is heightened by the awareness that:

"The majority of jobs created are filled by skilled labourers from the south."

(Winisk Band, Moose Factory, p. 3255)

The unemployed people of the north have few amenities. Their situation contrasts sharply with that of the people, many from the south, who fill, for limited periods, most of the stable public and private sector jobs in the north. The "transient professional" lives well in the north:

"Some people may object to the word 'transient' because it reminds them of the reality of colonialism . . . How else can we explain the tremendous housing benefits and salaries and northern allowances which we 'transient professionals' receive?"

(John Long, Moose Factory, p. 3310)

Northerners understandably expressed their resentment over these inequalities and suggested how they could be avoided:

"I think local people should be given preference when the north is developed. Again, we don't want a bunch of outsiders coming in and taking over and getting all the best jobs. Local people should be trained with government subsidies . . . so that the local people get the good jobs."

(Father Brian Tiffin, Geraldton, p. 1284)

To ensure that northerners benefit from job opportunities:

" . . . legislation (should) be developed that will protect the rights of northerners to employment opportunities and discourage the tendency to rely on transient labour."

(Kenora Women's Coalition, Kenora, p. 2716)

A suggestion was made that in hiring people to fill positions on or near native communities, native people should be given first choice:

"Only after local native people have been given ample opportunity to accept these jobs, should applications from outsiders be considered, in the event that there are still unfilled positions."

(Hector King, Sioux Lookout, p. 289)

In the case of new developments, some people argued that the onus be on the developer to ensure that every opportunity for meaningful participation is open to northerners:

"Sufficient lead time must be provided to train individuals to work at jobs which require training . . . Local people must be used if development . . . is to benefit those now living in this area, as it should."

(James Bay Education Centre, Moosonee, p. 3142)

Not only do individual jobs go to non-northerners, but so do entire projects. In Moosonee the Commission was told that:

"The government of Ontario in its program of improving communications to west coast James Bay communities, has hired, and reportedly without public tender, a firm from south of the 50th parallel to open winter roads to microwave tower sites during the winter of 1977-78, while the expertise, machinery and equipment for such a project has been and still is here, north of the 50th parallel in the communities of Moosonee, Fort Albany and Attawapiskat."

(James Bay Education Centre, Moosonee, p. 3143)

Northerners protested against such occurrences:

"We feel that when any large jobs are coming up, either government or private, that local contractors should be given not only a chance to bid on the contract but special consideration. We feel it is unfair as we pay local taxes, that outside contractors who make a big buck and leave, do not have to pay."

(Albert Brazeau, Pickle Lake, p. 1660)

Another irritant to northerners is the shipping of northern resources south for processing, depriving the north not only of processing jobs but also of the basis for the development of secondary industry. For example:

"While the forest industry obtains 80% of its round wood from the northern boreal forest, 60% of the jobs are in the southern sector. This is nothing short of being amazing."

(Ontario Professional Foresters Association, Ear Falls, p. 793)

As a consequence, the employment potential for northerners is severely limited. The Madsen Community Association stated:

"Resource-based industries usually result in an outward flow of profits, taxes and financial benefits. Even the by-product, employment, is in another area of the province."

(Madsen Community Association, Red Lake, p. 542)

The need for some diversification of the northern economy, based on further processing of the north's resources in the north, was repeatedly stressed. The resultant wider range of job opportunities would help to meet the complaint that:

"The job opportunities in the north are minimal. Males can either work in the mines or out in the bush. Females can wait on tables or babysit at a minimal wage."

(Doreen Heinrichs, Red Lake, p. 524)

While job opportunities are limited for men, they are virtually non-existent for women. Many of the problems faced by women in the north are discussed elsewhere. What is worth noting at this point is:

" . . . the assumption prevalent in single industry, male-dominated communities that women can contribute only in a domestic setting or in low skill, low status employment."

(Red Lake Inter Agency Co-ordinating Committee, Red Lake, p. 596)

Dependence of a town's labour force on a single industry makes nearly all jobs in that community insecure and dependent on the survival and success of that industry. The boom-bust pattern is known all too well by the people of the north. The Commission was told time and time again of:

" . . . the company towns which can die as quickly as they were once set up, . . . the lack of jobs for women, the relocation and dislocation which occurs when a company is closed."

(Ontario Federation of Labour, Kenora, p. 2658)

Northerners expressed their frustration at being the continual "victims" of boom and bust development. They stated their desire not to be dependent:

" . . . for our livelihood on a fragile economy based on exhaustible resources and external conditions over which we have no control."

(Vince Keller, Red Lake, p. 522)

They saw secondary industry and small-scale, controlled development as ways toward northern self-reliance.

One currently debated issue raised at the hearings is the alleged trade-off between environmental protection and jobs.

The Ontario Federation of Labour's position on this was clear:

"The labour movement adamantly refuses to be conned by the industry argument of the need for trade-offs between environmental control and jobs. We have learned, to our detriment, that the usual outcome of such argument is both pollution and unemployment. We no longer intend to be so naive, and are becoming increasingly convinced that pollution control methods in themselves can generate employment and that alternative methods of resource and energy development must be intensively researched and examined."

(Ontario Federation of Labour, Kenora, p. 2661)

The Ministry of the Environment also spoke to the concern that stringent environmental regulations are jeopardizing industry's survival and thus employment opportunities:

"In discussing economic implications of environmental standards in Ontario, we feel that the argument that environmental standards are driving away investment in Ontario is largely unsubstantiated."

(Ministry of the Environment, Red Lake, p. 562)

The Ministry of the Environment suggested that there could well be positive returns to industry from pollution abatement:

"An example of such a benefit is the improved efficiency of an industry by recycling useable by-products which were previously wasted. Another benefit is the creation of new jobs associated with the designing, manufacturing and installation of pollution abatement equipment."

(Ministry of the Environment, Red Lake, p. 563)

Environmental degradation's impact on the native economy, however, clearly reduces the returns from self-employment in trapping, hunting, fishing and other traditional pursuits. The extent to which native people have been able to support themselves through traditional pursuits has been declining steadily, they claimed, while opportunities for wage employment have not increased at anywhere near a compensating rate. In fact, they pointed out, jobs which in the past have been open to native people and compatible with their values and lifestyle, such as in guiding and logging, have been on

the decline; guiding as a result of environmental destruction (for example, mercury contamination) and logging because of the harvesting practices introduced by increased mechanization, among other factors.

The Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association described what is happening to their people in the forest industry:

"In the bush there has been a steady decline of the small third party contractors: the independent cutters on contract to the mills . . . This means that we must now work mainly for the big companies. For some of our people this is satisfactory, but the loss of small, independent contractors means it is increasingly difficult for an individual or group to set up by themselves. It means there is a loss of flexibility in bush employment. Many of our people require flexibility during that period when they are trying to establish themselves in the labour market. The big companies are too big to allow this. Even those who work for the big companies in the bush have to worry because of the increasing mechanization. In most cases we don't have formal education, we have skills and experience that are not necessarily recognized."

(Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association, Kenora, p. 2640)

Shifting to wage employment has not always been easy for native people. Their perspectives of time and other dimensions differ. Southern models of efficiency, productivity and capital are unfamiliar to them. Patterns of living and religious beliefs also seemed to cause difficulties in adjusting to the requirements of wage employment in the north.

The native liaison officer of the Umex Mine at Pickle Lake described some of the problems involved in employing native people:

"The Indians don't like working night shifts. Night shift for an Indian is sleeping, among other things. We lost more Indians by putting them on shift work. Another thing, I could not get any Indians to work underground. They are superstitious and they say the underground is for dead people . . . Another thing, they did not like living in bunkhouses with the other guys, they could not adapt to living in bunkhouses."

(Henry Munro, Pickle Lake, p. 1750)

Native people did these jobs regularly, however, if they had an employer who understood the need for a special kind of flexibility, who recognized the force of long-standing tradition:

"Then comes the hunting season when the call of the migrating goose is irresistible to a people whose very lives had depended on successful hunting for generations back."

(Canon John Long, Nakina, p. 1532)

While native people have successfully entered the wage economy, the Commission was told that this in no way reflects a general desire among the Indian people to abandon their traditional way of life:

"Traditional land-based occupations like hunting, fishing and trapping will always remain the most preferred occupations of many of our people, and even those who have joined the wage economy will always want to retain their close relationship to the land."

(Treaty # 9, Sioux Lookout, p. 82)

Striking a balance between wage employment and the traditional ways of living off the land has not always been easy for native people. In many cases, participation in wage employment has meant a shift away from traditional pursuits. The short-term nature of many types of employment in the north has resulted in a population unable to support itself fully either from traditional pursuits or through wage employment. An example was given of the early gold mines in the Pickle Lake area:

"The mining community involved our people only to the extent they could become wage labourers for unskilled positions. No thought was given to training our people so that they could pursue more meaningful goals within the wage economy. This participation in wage labour, even for such a limited period, resulted in our people giving up their reliance on our natural resource economy of trapping, fishing and hunting; a reliance that was and is in serious jeopardy due to the increase in tourist hunters and sportsmen, through the access roads. Consequently, with the closing of the mines, we became welfare recipients, and lost the pride in a culture which had once been, for us, a source of strength and dignity. Inevitably, this loss of pride was marked by an increase in alcoholism, violence and social disintegration."

(Treaty # 9, Sioux Lookout, p. 112)

Native people indicated they were actively seeking employment which will give them a sense of worth and:

"... the opportunity to use the skills and knowledge that we have in order to make a living."

(Sandy Lake Band, Sandy Lake, p. 2421)

While the type of job that a native person might feel to be worthwhile and rewarding could well differ from what others might desire in a job, all northerners expressed the concern that employment be meaningful.

As the Moosonee Development Area Board put it:

"We want good continued creative employment that gives pride and feeling of accomplishment to everyone."

(Moosonee Development Area Board, Moosonee, p. 3109)

Both natives and non-natives seemed to share the feeling that all northerners should have:

"... the right to determine the way they are going to live and the kinds of jobs that are necessary to provide a decent standard of living."

(Ontario Federation of Labour, Kenora, p. 2655)

Further development of natural resources was seen by most northerners to offer the greatest hope for increased employment opportunities. Northerners differed, however, on the questions of the pace and scale of development they wanted to see in their area, just as they differed in the types and range of employment opportunities they sought. A consistent view, however, was that:

"Most people in the area ... would like to see growth and development at a pace and size which would not destroy the way of life or the environment."

(Tri-Municipal Committee, Red Lake, p. 476)

Many people expressed a sensitivity to the desires of others, in particular to native people, in their call for development:

"Resource development must consider the northern environment as well as the quality of life for those who wish to hunt, fish and trap. Thus, while it would be wrong to hinder this (traditional native) lifestyle in the north, it would also be just as wrong to deny opportunities to wage employment to those who seek it."

(City of Timmins, Timmins, p. 856)

Most northerners seemed to share the view expressed by Arnold Peters:

"We are a selfish people. We want jobs. We want our share of the good life ... but don't make us squander the resources left to us."

(Arnold Peters, MP, Moosonee, p. 3124)



Environmental Standards—Necessary Safeguards

Northerners care passionately about their environment. The Royal Commission was left in little doubt of this at the conclusion of its hearings. Most speakers agreed that development was necessary for economic survival, but nearly all wanted safeguards for the environment to be taken into account when plans were made and approved for that development. With few exceptions, northerners decried past desecration of the land and called for government-enforced standards to ensure that the environment is properly cared for in the future.

Respect for Environment—How Great a Priority?

Charges of pollution and environmental destruction brought to mind images of fish floating belly up, of scum-coated rivers, of black smoke belching from industrial stacks, of the haze created by the exhausts of vehicles, of refuse littering once-pleasant countryside.

To some of the people of northern Ontario, pollution also meant “Fish for Fun” signs along mercury-contaminated rivers, the destruction of the forest by clear-cutting, the flooding caused by hydro dams; and for native people, the abuse of an environment created by the Great Spirit, to be used, tended and shared.

For industry in the north, the environment is just one of many factors to be considered in cost-benefit analyses. Like other costs, those for environmental protection are kept to a minimum. Effective business management measures the environment in the dollars and cents that it would cost to install required pollution abatement equipment or to locate at a different site.

To native people and to many other northerners, such a business approach is difficult. How can one place a dollar figure on the land on which one's grandfather had his trapline, or the river from which one's family is fed and one's livelihood earned? But even if one did, others have usually decided which environmental impacts of a proposed development will be abated and which will not. Many northerners expressed resentment that such decisions are often made in the boardrooms of Toronto or government offices in Queen's Park and Ottawa by people who never directly experience the consequences of their decisions.

The Commission learned that northerners understand the cycle of natural change in the northern environment — the erosion of the land, the life cycle of forests, the shifting patterns of the rivers. It is man-caused changes accompanying large-scale developments which are most feared. Experience with these has shown them to be destructive when left uncontrolled. At the Commission's hearings, people referred to the north's legacies of man-made changes in the environment, such as mercury contamination, wood wastes in the waterways, polluting mine tailings.

Many northerners considered that development should be allowed only when adequate regard and respect have been shown for the northern environment. Good environmental legislation, they maintained, must consider the special character of northern Ontario.

The Commission discovered that few northerners tire of proclaiming that they live in the north out of a love for the land. Many stated proudly that they were born in the north, or that they had chosen to live there. Many spoke of their ardent wish to conserve and pass on this land to their children and generations yet unborn.

Some Sort of Control Necessary

Preservation of the environment in the face of future development was a subject of major concern to many people appearing before the Commission. Opinions differed as to how much regulation was appropriate, but there was universal agreement that some form of control was necessary. Questions regarding the matter of environmental standards begged answers. Who was responsible for what? Who would pay? Underlying the anxiety and concern was evidence of peoples' love for the land north of 50 and their strong desire to protect the environment.

One resident's strong attachment was expressed:

"For the land is here, this part of northwestern Ontario, 50 and north — it is still relatively undamaged, still alive, still infused with the quality of the celebration of the meaning of this land. It is one of the very few places left in the world where this is true."

(Millie Barrett, Geraldton, p. 1416)

The north, the Commission learned, is particularly susceptible to pollution:

"Environmental safeguards are equally as important in the north as in the south. Some of the factors in the north create unique problems . . . The reduced buffering capacity of the northern lakes makes them particularly susceptible to acidification . . . By their nature resource-based industries have wide-reaching environmental effects. The climate conditions in the north shorten the period of biological activity which in turn lowers the degree of regeneration as well as assimilation of wastes. This, therefore, requires a longer period of time for the natural systems to respond to man's disturbances."

(Ministry of the Environment, Red Lake, p. 559)

Recognition of this susceptibility, and the need to protect the land were expressed to the Commission:

"It has taken nature millions of years to cover the hard rock which is still very shallow and quite poor. The trees are low in height and stunted. In fact, it is a miracle that the land is covered with a forest . . . The industrial community and its allies in government who are bent on making the easy money, the fast buck, see it differently. They view it as 16,640,000 acres of unclaimed forest that they can log and turn to pulp. They do not realize that if you clear this forest you destroy permanently a delicately balanced ecological system. This land is so unique, so intolerant of disturbance that it seems blasphemous to even think of it as property."

(Treaty # 3, Dryden, p. 419)

For some people, apprehension was so great that further development was opposed:

"We, therefore, as native people are opposed to the big industrial development projects proposed by the provincial and federal governments. These projects completely destroy the land and the beautiful surroundings which are not replaceable but vitally important to the survival of the people. It also destroys the animals that need the elements of the forests and waters to survive. If these development projects do go ahead we will have nothing to offer to our nation yet to be born. Ours was and is the way of nature, a natural existence."

(Chief Fred Wesley, Moose Factory, p. 3234)

Not only natives suggested that development be restricted:

"We believe the past performance of Reed Paper in our area leaves much to be desired. We do not think the environment will withstand the mammoth mechanized development this company proposes. The already polluted English-Wabigoon system cannot be allowed to carry the effluent from any new pulp mill."

(Carl Stephens, Canadian Paperworkers Union, Kenora, p. 2737)

A well-known academic expressed his concern that an industrial society would further develop northern resources even when environmental degradation was a predictable consequence:

"The forgotten side of the equation, it seems to me, is the environment, and the social economic considerations of native people. In even a medium-term perspective (for example, the lifetime of our grandchildren), the environment must be considered of greater importance than the economic side, if we were forced to decide on one side of the equation or the other. However, the pressures for economic development in northern Ontario are so strong that there is little likelihood, during this century, that such an either/or choice would fall on the side of the environment. In realistic terms, therefore, the question is whether decisions on the use and development of water in northern Ontario can be made in a manner that will be compatible with the protection of the interests and rights of native people, and in a manner that preserves the vital elements of the environment, particularly the renewable resource components of it."

(Dr. Douglas Pimlott, Timmins, p. 914)

Not everyone was convinced that environmental protection should be the first consideration on the list of priorities. The Prospectors and Developers Association took exception to the phrase "preservation of the environment." Their contention was:

"The environment is constantly changing. Man, in common with all inhabitants of the biosphere, must adapt to these changes. A static environment is an impossibility . . . Every year this waterway strips five million tons of soil and rock from this region. This rate of erosion is increasing as the land rebounds from the last ice age. An activity of man is miniscule in comparison."

(Prospectors and Developers Association, Timmins, p. 1188)

The Cochrane Board of Trade voiced the need to protect the environment and to pass on a "decent and pleasing countryside and way of life to succeeding generations" (p. 1140) but were concerned that some environmentalists have forgotten that the wealth they consume or administer is created through development of natural resources:

"Many such persons are comfortably established in the affluent upper middle class of our society, they usually inhabit the southern cities of our province, far removed from the areas which they seek to 'protect' and they are usually well removed from that portion of our economy which earns its livelihood from the production, processing or distribution of real physical wealth . . . We are opposed to the unrealistic attitude of such people toward the wealth-producing segment of our society. They sneer at those of us who favour development of our natural resources, as though we were motivated only by greed, and intent on the defacement and destruction of our natural environment . . . We cannot join those who wish us to commit economic suicide by forbidding all development. We too are part of the environment, and we claim the right to a reasonable economic existence."

(Cochrane Board of Trade, Timmins, p. 1139)

Both natives and non-natives expressed a desire for some industrial development to help provide them with a more stable and varied economic base. However, they did not want development at the expense of the environment, and they wanted some control over potential damage to the environment:

"We look forward to progress in the north, but controlled developments for the betterment of our peoples, and not the type of development that is destructive to everything but the profit margin of a large multi-national corporation. We have heard that Reed Paper no longer wants the tract of land they had asked for, but we fear that if Reed does not want these forests, then another company with the same bad habits will take the forest sooner or later anyway. We have also heard that a pipeline is to be built close to our communities. We want to know what will be the effects

of this pipeline on the land and the animals, and why we have not been consulted about this pipeline that will affect our lives. We have been told that our rivers may be dammed to create hydroelectric power, but we have not been consulted and we think that dams will badly affect our lives."

(Bill Mamakeesic, Sandy Lake, p. 2482)

More specific pollution problems were recounted by northerners in addition to their general concern for the environment. Mercury contamination from pulp and paper mills of waterways received widespread condemnation. But there were other problems created by the forest industry:

" . . . the bush being cut down . . . does have an effect. First of all, it affects the partridge and the deer dependent on the pines and other sources for food. The moose and other large animals need it for protection and shelter from hunters and in the cold winters. The noise scares off the other animals."

(Daniel Yoki, Nakina, p. 1524)

"The forest companies bulldozed my trails. They have destroyed my traps. They knocked trees into the Low-bush River . . . Now I can't canoe anymore because of the deadfall."

(Ontario Abitibi Band, Timmins, p. 1232)

The use of heavy equipment in clear-cutting of the forests has had adverse effects on the soil itself:

"Soil compaction, deep ruts and trenches caused excessive damage to residual trees and layerings."

(Dr. Thomas Alcoze, Toronto, p. 2043)

Mills situated close to towns affect air and water quality:

" . . . unburned wood particles drift into the town depending on which way the wind is . . . Here we have . . . logs that drifted up on the shore from water drives."

(Township of Longlac, Nakina, p. 1459)

The mining industry has also created problems:

"The Kam Kotia Mines . . . is an abandoned mine site with a tailings area which has had some problems . . . Some leaching and spillage is taking place into what is called the little Kam Kotia Creek . . . The old tailings disposal area is, in fact, contaminating the area . . . East of Matheson, Ontario there is a waste disposal dump rising several hundred feet above normal

ground elevation. The content of short fibre asbestos in this waste rock is a health hazard; and the structure of the dump, we understand, is such as to allow erosion by wind as well as rain."

(Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Timmins, p. 1046)

A chief of Treaty # 9 described some of the residue with which northern residents have been confronted:

"You will have seen the deserted mineheads and several hundred yards of tailings piled 20 feet high. Like in so many other northern communities, outsiders came to Geraldton, dug up the ore and extracted the gold. It was shipped out of the north at a value of \$35. per ounce. Where is that wealth today? Do you see it here in Geraldton? No, Mr. Commissioner, all you see today is the ancient structures of the tailings piles. We suggest you fly over the area when the snow has gone and see what the people of Geraldton have today. See how even after all these years, over a huge area nothing grows. Imagine what it must have been like at the height of activity."

(Chief Charlie Okeese, Geraldton, p. 1375)

The tourist industry did not entirely escape allocation of blame:

"American hunters are overkilling the animals . . . They destroy the property on our traplines . . . These people seem to have no respect for our environment."

(Cat Lake Reserve, Osnaburgh, p. 1818)

Acid rain, a possible result of sulphur dioxide emission from the incomplete burning of fuels or smelting processes, was raised as a hazard to vegetation, lakes and fish:

"Considerable evidence has been amassed on the subject of sulphuric emissions. Biochemists of the University of Toronto and McMaster University . . . have documented fallout of diluted sulphuric gases are causing the water quality in many lakes in northern Ontario to become more acidic than the fish populations can tolerate."

(Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Timmins, p. 1047)

The Commission was told that mercury compounds are more readily soluble in an acidic medium than in an alkaline or neutral one. One consequence could be increased concentration of mercury compounds in northern lakes, leached from rock outcrops by the action of acid rain.

Industry generally was felt to be the source of much pollution:

" . . . none of us, regardless of where we live, can

be sure that the water we drink is not contaminated with radioactive materials, or PCB's, or DDT, or mercury, or asbestos fibres, or arsenic, or a combination of these and other poisons."

(Kenora-Keewatin Ministerial Association, p. 2690)

On the other hand, industry representatives advised the Commission that environmental damage is not necessarily as severe as contended by some. For example, Steep Rock Iron Mines described the results of development 30 years ago:

"These projects disturbed the environment to a very significant degree. Today, 30 years after the Steep Rock Diversion was constructed, and 15 years after the dredging was completed, it is evident that while the environment was temporarily disturbed and altered, it was not poisoned or permanently destroyed . . . Properly controlled, massive disruptions of the environment need not have a long-term, negative effect. The fact that the Atikokan area, including the very areas that were disturbed by the diversions and dredging is not only prime vacation area for thousands of tourists and fishermen, but also a favoured home for 6,000 residents of Atikokan, indicates that development of mineral resources, and enjoyment of our northern Ontario environment can exist together."

(Steep Rock Iron Mines, Pickle Lake, p. 1610)

A mining association declared that disruption of the environment was minimal:

"We estimate that these mining activities (north of 50) have affected some 16 square kilometers of land, or four one thousandths of one per cent of the territory you are examining. Evidence of the 26 worked-out mines is rapidly disappearing as the vegetation reasserts itself."

(Prospectors and Developers Association, Timmins, p. 1190)

While industry accepted the need for environmental protection, some concern was expressed by representatives of several mining companies about who should pay and what degree of protection was appropriate:

"When Umex decided to proceed with the development of a mine at Pickle Lake, it committed itself as a matter of corporate policy to the safeguarding of the environment and the furnishing of public services, all to very high standards. The costs have been unreasonably high . . . The time has arrived for consideration to be given to having the general public bear more of the costs of environmental protection. When a company cannot pass on to its customers the costs of environmental impact studies and pollution control projects, then the costs can become fatal when considering the feasibility of a project."

(Union Minière Explorations and Mining Ltd., Pickle Lake, p. 1694)

"We, the Griffith, are fearful that controls will become so unreasonably rigid that industrial growth will be drastically cut and the economy in the area will become stagnant resulting in social as well as economic problems."

(Griffith Mine, Red Lake, p. 685)

The Ministry of the Environment countered arguments that adherence to environmental standards is driving away investment. Their officers pointed out that many competing jurisdictions, e.g., the United States, Sweden and other provinces all have similar standards. Since companies will be faced with some form of pollution control wherever they locate, inability to compete must be considered with other factors, such as differentials in labour costs, political and economic climates and accessibility of markets.

Considerable concern was expressed at the hearings over the process whereby the environmental effects of proposed developments are assessed. The mechanism for assessment in Ontario is the Environmental Assessment Act,¹ however, it has not as yet been applied north of 50. Industry indicated its wariness about the assessment process. The following comments from Reed Ltd. are representative of industry's feelings with respect to environmental assessment:

"We believe it is essential that whatever regulatory ground rules and development review and approval procedures are established, that these not be unreasonably and unduly restrictive and that they not be subject to arbitrary and unilateral change. If the Commission is to consider and make recommendations with respect to such environmental ground rules and review procedures for different classes of development, then these objectives should be kept in mind."

(Reed Ltd., Red Lake, p. 516)

¹The Environmental Assessment Act came into effect in July of 1975. The Act establishes a process intended:

- 1) to identify and evaluate all potentially significant environmental effects of proposed undertakings at a stage when a broad range of alternatives and remedial measures (including the decision not to proceed) is available to the proponent;
- 2) to ensure that the proponent of an undertaking and those government officials who must approve the undertaking give consideration to means of avoiding or mitigating adverse environmental effects before granting approval to proceed.

All public sector undertakings are subject to the Act unless exempted by regulation.

Only those private sector undertakings designated by regulation are subject to the Act.

Proponents governed by the Act must prepare and submit an environmental assessment containing an evaluation of the ecological, social, cultural, and economic effects of the proposed undertaking and practical alternatives. An assessment, because of the broad definition of environment in the Act, can be used as a basis for determining the full range of economic and social costs and benefits of a proposed undertaking, not just its effects on the physical environment. Once an environmental assessment is submitted, the Ministry of the Environment coordinates a government review of the document by all ministries and agencies with relevant interests or responsibilities.

Both the environmental assessment and the government review are public documents and may be viewed by the public. The Act provides that any person may make written submissions on these documents to the Minister of the Environment. Members of the public may also re-

quest that a hearing be held by the Environmental Assessment Board by giving written notice to the Minister.

If a hearing is held, the acceptance of the environmental assessment and approval of the undertaking are decisions made by the Environmental Assessment Board. The provincial Cabinet may vary the decision of the Board, substitute its own decision, or require a new hearing to be held.

If no hearing is held, the Minister of the Environment decides upon the acceptability of the environmental assessment and the Cabinet determines whether the undertaking should be allowed to proceed.

All important notices and documents under the Act are available to interested members of the public and are included in a public record maintained by the Minister.

Onakawana Development Limited urged the Commission to consider the effects of uncertainty and delay in the assessment process and suggested that:

"A single government agency, a single, well-established procedure, and one jurisdiction for submissions, reports and hearings and approvals would be of great benefit."

(Onakawana Development Limited, Timmins, p. 958)

That is, it is not so much the existence of an assessment process that could inhibit development, but the uncertainties created by "a constant recycling or repetition of the process prior to approval". (p. 958)

There seemed, in fact, to be a general feeling among both developers and those anxious to control development that one of the Commission's most significant contributions would be to examine and clarify the procedures whereby proposed development projects for the north are assessed. In effect this would necessitate an examination of the existing legislation, the Environmental Assessment Act. Many felt that:

"Although your Inquiry has not been set up under, and indeed is completely independent from the recently proclaimed Environmental Assessment Act, we believe that there are strong parallels between your work and specific environmental assessment of designated undertakings under the jurisdiction of the Act. We believe, therefore, that your work will influence future application of the Act."

(Ontario Society for Environmental Management, Toronto, p. 2200)

Many of the suggestions made to the Commission were directed towards developing a humane and sensitive planning and environmental assessment model for the north. These included recommendations for provision for community hearings, full disclosure and access to all documents and information and adequate funding for public participation. A group from York University outlined what it considered essential to an adequate assessment:

"Assessment procedures should require effective participation by all affected individuals and groups, and permit participation by other interested organizations."

For this criterion to be fulfilled it is necessary that there be:

- (a) full and convenient access to relevant information for all actors;
- (b) provision of sufficient time and resources for disadvantaged groups to conduct original research and prepare both their own positions and responses to the proponent's arguments;
- (c) independent forums for the evidence to be received and evaluated;
- (d) a public information program."

(York University Polar Gas Case Study Group, Geraldton, p. 1307)

While industry expressed the wish that the assessment process be streamlined as much as possible and exorbitant costs avoided, most northerners were anxious that significant local input become an essential ingredient of the assessment process. Many felt that present legislation was inadequate because there was no such provision for "real" public involvement. Dr. John Spence drew a parallel with the situation in northern Quebec:

"If this development (Onakawana) were presently in northern Quebec, the terms of reference of the assessment would be established . . . (by) native people, provincial and federal representatives . . . In Quebec, native people would also participate in the evaluation of the assessment and in the formulation of the final impact statement."

(Dr. John Spence, Timmins, p. 1093)

The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association also felt that:

"[Environmental] controls should be specific to individual sites and developments and should incorporate local input into decisions which will affect the life-style of the people of the area."

(Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, Kenora, p. 2522)

The Law Union of Ontario urged the Commission to examine the present Environmental Assessment Act to determine whether it includes:

" . . . effective public participation. Funding must be made available to permit meaningful involvement by the individuals and communities affected by any proposal, and there must be real access to the decision-making process through both formal and community hearings."

(Law Union of Ontario, Kenora, p. 3041)

Pollution Probe recommended as well that:

" . . . the Commission critically examine Ontario's environmental assessment legislation and suggest

amendments to close loopholes as large as the one through with the Darlington Nuclear Generating Station slipped."¹

(Pollution Probe, Toronto, p. 2026)

¹All public undertakings are subject to the Environmental Assessment Act unless specifically exempted. The Darlington Nuclear Generating Station was exempted on the grounds that it was well advanced in planning when the Act was proclaimed.

Representatives of Treaty # 9 raised a number of questions about the adequacy of the Environmental Assessment Act:

"In our opinion, the Environmental Assessment Act is unclear in its criteria and inadequate for examining such large-scale projects as Onakawana and Reed Paper developments. It is crucial that the whole Act be reviewed, refined and revised. These five questions, we think, are the vital ones to be asked:

- 1) Was the Act designed on the basis of sufficient knowledge of our fragile northern environment?
- 2) Did its design take into consideration any other worldwide environmental practices?
- 3) Does it have enough scope to cover massive projects with a multitude of environmental affects?
- 4) Is there a realistic method of enforcing the regulations of such an act?
- 5) Finally, and most critically, why was this Act established without prior consultation with the people of the north, the people to whom it matters the most?"

(Treaty # 9, Moose Factory, p. 3353)

And at Moosonee, Andrew Rickard, Chief of Grand Council Treaty # 9, stated that:

"The Environmental Assessment Act only provides for a southern industrial and urban society; it was not drafted with the fragile environment of our north in mind. Most important, it was developed without the input of our people, the majority of the inhabitants north of the 50th parallel. The Act contains no recognition of our culture, our economic style, nor the very real conceptual differences that exist between our society and your industrial society."

(Treaty # 9, Moosonee, p. 3093)

Beyond the question of assessment prior to the approval of a project lies the monitoring of the completed project and its adherence to environmental standards. Once an industrial plant is in operation what should be an acceptable level of environmental standards and how can these standards be enforced?

Current provincial standards were seen by some as not stringent enough to protect the environment:

"Ontario Hydro has repeatedly stated that the emission from its coal-fired generating station at Atikokan

will meet the standards established by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. The project will not, of course, meet the United States and Minnesota SO₂ standards. Our concern is that the Ontario standards are inadequate."

(Treaty 3, Kenora, p. 2563A)

Others had no argument with the quality of the standards as such. In Kenora, Warner Troyer expressed his concern that government unwillingness to enforce standards was more of a problem than low standards:

"Nor do assurances from Premier William Davis and Environment Minister George Kerr that Ontario has the best pollution control and health protection legislation in the world give rise to much confidence. Vichy France, after all, had the first Good Samaritan legislation in history; and Nazi Germany had model social welfare laws. It is the will to enforce the laws, as demonstrated by the resources and priorities assigned to them, that talks, not the bare or barren statutes."

(Warner Troyer, Kenora, p. 2617)

Proposed solutions to the pollution problem could be divided into three groupings: a) promotion of the conserver ethic; b) utilization of technology to limit damage; and c) establishing and enforcing adequate safeguards for the environment.

Some of those advocating a conserver society pointed to the Indians, who had lived in the north for centuries without damaging the ecology, as an example for all Ontarians:

"The native people have lived in Canada for thousands of years without electricity, gas, heat, or automobiles and we still survive . . . Is it not time that natives and non-natives work together to find a solution? With uncontrolled development aimed only at profits and without regard for the delicate balance of life, we will only gain a few years of easy living; then it will all begin again. Meanwhile, our traplines are destroyed, our waters polluted, and our morals defiled as unconcerned outsiders come into the communities. Listen to us! We can work together. We can help each other. People abuse what they have and then are still not happy. Study our way of life and you will find a way of live in the present economic pressures without destroying northern life and human lives."

(Native Student Association, Lakehead University, Osnaburgh, p. 1932)

Pollution Probe expressed its belief that:

"A stable environmental and economic future for Canada is possible only if we begin immediately to implement the 'conserver ethic'. In recognizing that natural resources are limited in extent, a conserver society seeks to minimize the waste and abuse of these resources. We can, quite literally, do more with less."

(Pollution Probe, Toronto, p. 2022)

With regard to technology, opinion was divided as to whether the present state of the art was sufficient to maintain the environment in a prudent manner. There were those who claimed that present technology is adequate:

"We submit that with the experience and technology developed through the years, modern industry can control pollution effectively. Mining developments of recent years in our area demonstrate this fact."

(Association of Professional Engineers, Red Lake, p. 669)

Others saw a need for further research and felt that government was the appropriate agency to initiate such research:

"We must develop alternative technologies which are soft or non-violent . . . Government must take an active part in developing these alternative technologies, and they must take an active part in evaluating technologies before they are put into use."

(David Schwartz, Kenora, p. 2952)

Once those technologies are available, they must be used, and non-compliance met with penalties:

"Pollution controls applied to factories would mean that the technological advances of the seventies and the eighties are being utilized to meet the requirements and wishes of both government and the people of the province. Once the mechanics of the controls are established, they must be both monitored and enforced rigidly, with fines and restrictions serious enough to warrant compliance on the part of the industry."

(Madsen Community Association, Red Lake, p. 539)

A high school student echoed this thought:

"Industry should not be allowed to step over government controls. If industry does not adhere to the regulations, strong penalties against the offenders should be strictly enforced. Our environment is our children's future."

(Cathy Morgan, Red Lake, p. 521)

Northern white residents, it was argued, must come out strongly in defence of environmental standards, otherwise they may find themselves in the position described by a native spokesman from Whitedog:

"You have been on this continent for 600 years now and there exists very little evidence that you've learned a thing. If you continue in your present fashion, in another 600 years you'll find yourselves sitting all alone and naked on a hunk of broken rock outside of where Ear Falls used to be, asking yourselves, 'Hey, what the hell went wrong?', and you might even add, 'Hmm, maybe we should have listened to them Indians'."

(Charles Wagamese, Whitedog, p. 2808)

